THE

MONK:

A

ROMANCE.

Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, ſagas,
Nocturnos lemures, portentaque.

HORAT.

Dreams, magic terrors, ſpells of mighty power,
Witches, and ghoſts who rove at midnight hour.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

DUBLIN:

Printed by BRETT SMITH,

For P. WOGAN, P. BYRNE, W. JONES, AND G. FOLINGSBY.

1796.

#66P-79 V.1.1

PREFACE.

IMITATION OF HORACE.

EP. 20.—B. 1.

METHINKS, Oh! vain ill-judging book,
I ſee thee caſt a wiſhful look,
Where reputations won and loſt are
In famous row called Paternoſter.
Incenſed to find your precious olio
Buried in unexplored port-folio,
You ſcorn the prudent lock and key,
And pant well bound and gilt to ſee
Your volume in the window ſet
Of Stockdale, Hookham or Debrett.
Go then, and paſs that dangerous bourn
Whence never book can back return;
And when you find, condemned, deſpiſed,
Neglected, blamed, and criticiſed,

Abuſe from all who read you fall,
(If haply you be read at all)
Sorely will you your folly ſigh at,
And wiſh for me, and home, and quiet.

Aſſuming now a conjuror's office, I
Thus on your future fortune propheſy :—
Soon as your novelty is o'er,
And you are young and new no more,
In ſome dark dirty corner thrown,
Mouldy with damps, with cobwebs ſtrown,
Your leaves ſhall be the book-worm's prey ;
Or ſent to chandler-ſhop away,
And doomed to ſuffer public ſcandal,
Shall line the trunk, or wrap the candle!

But ſhould you meet with approbation,
And ſome one find an inclination
To aſk, by natural tranſition,
Reſpecting me and my condition ;
That I am one, the enquirer teach,
Nor very poor, nor very rich ;
Of paſſions ſtrong, of haſty nature,
Of graceleſs form and dwarfiſh ſtature ;
By few approved, and few approving ;
Extreme in hating and in loving ;
Abhorring all whom I diſlike,
Adoring who my fancy ſtrike ;
In forming judgments never long,
And for the moſt part judging wrong ;
In friendſhip firm, but ſtill believing
Others are treacherous and deceiving,

And thinking in the preſent æra
That friendſhip is a pure chimæra:
More paſſionate no creature living,
Proud, obſtinate, and unforgiving,
But yet for thoſe who kindneſs ſhow,
Ready through fire and ſmoke to go.

Again, ſhould it be aſked your page,
"Pray, what may be the author's age?"
Your faults, no doubt, will make it clear,
I ſcarce have ſeen my twentieth year,
Which paſſed, kind Reader, on my word,
While England's throne held George the Third.

Now then your venturous courſe purſue:
Go, my delight! Dear book, adieu!

HAGUE,
Oct. 28, 1794. M. G. L.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE firſt idea of this Romance was ſuggeſted by the ſtory of the *Santon Barſiſa*, related in The Guardian.----The *Bleeding Nun* is a tradition ſtill credited in many parts of Germany; and I have been told, that the ruins of the caſtle of *Lauenſtein*, which ſhe is ſuppoſed to haunt, may yet be ſeen upon the borders of *Thuringia*.---The *Water-King*, from the third to the twelfth ſtanza, is the fragment of an original Daniſh ballad---And *Belerma and Durandarte* is tranſlated from ſome ſtanzas to be found in a collection of old Spaniſh poetry, which contains alſo the popular ſong of *Gayferos and Meleſindra*, mentioned in Don Quixote.----I have now made a full avowal of all the plagiariſms of which I am aware myſelf; but I doubt not, many more may be found, of which I am at preſent totally unconſcious.

THE

THE MONK.

CHAP. I.

——Lord Angelo is preciſe;
Stands at a guard with envy; ſcarce confeſſes
That his blood flows, or that his appetite
Is more to bread than ſtone.
MEASURE FOR MEASURE.]

SCARCELY had the abbey-bell tolled for five minutes, and already was the church of the Capuchins thronged with auditors. Do not encourage the idea, that the crowd was aſſembled either from motives of piety or thirſt of information. But very few were influenced by thoſe reaſons; and in a city where ſuperſtition reigns with ſuch deſpotic ſway as in Madrid, to ſeek for true devotion would be a fruitleſs attempt. The audience now aſſembled in the Capuchin church was collected by various cauſes, but all of them were foreign to the oſtenſible motive. The women came to ſhow themſelves, the men to ſee the women:

ſome were attracted by curioſity to hear an orator ſo celebrated; ſome came, becauſe they had no better means of employing their time till the play began; ſome, from being aſſured that it would be impoſſible to find places in the church; and one half of Madrid was brought thither by expecting to meet the other half. The only perſons truly anxious to hear the preacher, were a few antiquated devotees, and half a dozen rival orators, determined to find fault with and ridicule the diſcourſe. As to the remainder of the audience, the ſermon might have been omitted altogether, certainly without their being diſappointed, and very probably without their perceiving the omiſſion.

Whatever was the occaſion, it is at leaſt certain, that the Capuchin church had never witneſſed a more numerous aſſembly. Every corner was filled, every ſeat was occupied. The very ſtatues which ornamented the long aiſles were preſſed into the ſervice. Boys ſuſpended themſelves upon the wings of cherubims; St. Francis and St. Mark bore each a ſpectator on his ſhoulders; and St. Agatha found herſelf under the neceſſity of carrying double. The conſequence was, that in ſpite of all their hurry and expedition, our two new comers, on entering the church, looked round in vain for places.

However, the old woman continued to move forwards. In vain were exclamations of diſpleaſure vented againſt her from all ſides: in vain was ſhe addreſſed with—"I aſſure you, Segnora, there are no places here."—"I beg, Segnora, that you will not crowd me ſo intolerably!"—"Segnora, you cannot paſs this way.

Bleſs

Bleſs me! How can people be ſo troubleſome!" —The old woman was obſtinate, and on ſhe went. By dint of perſeverance and two brawny arms ſhe made a paſſage through the crowd, and managed to buſtle herſelf into the very body of the church, at no great diſtance from the pulpit. Her companion had followed her with timidity and in ſilence, profiting by the exertions of her conductreſs.

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the old woman in a tone of diſappointment, while ſhe threw a glance of enquiry round her; "Holy Virgin! what heat! what a crowd! I wonder what can be the meaning of all this. I believe we muſt return: there is no ſuch thing as a ſeat to be had, and nobody ſeems kind enough to accommodate us with theirs."

This broad hint attracted the notice of two cavaliers, who occupied ſtools on the right hand, and were leaning their backs againſt the ſeventh column from the pulpit. Both were young, and richly habited. Hearing this appeal to their politeneſs pronounced in a female voice, they interrupted their converſation to look at the ſpeaker. She had thrown up her veil in order to take a clearer look round the cathedral. Her hair was red, and ſhe ſquinted. The cavaliers turned round, and renewed their converſation.

"By all means," replied the old woman's companion; "by all means, Leonella, let us return home immediately; the heat is exceſſive, and I am terrified at ſuch a crowd."

Theſe words were pronounced in a tone of unexampled ſweetneſs. The cavaliers again broke off their diſcourſe, but for this time

they were not contented with looking up: both ſtarted involuntarily from their ſeats, and turned themſelves towards the ſpeaker.

The voice came from a female, the delicacy and elegance of whoſe figure inſpired the youths with the moſt lively curioſity to view the face to which it belonged. This ſatisfaction was denied them. Her features were hidden by a thick veil; but ſtruggling through the crowd had deranged it ſufficiently to diſcover a neck which for ſymmetry and beauty might have vied with the Medicean Venus. It was of the moſt dazzling whiteneſs, and received additional charms from being ſhaded by the treſſes of her long fair hair, which deſcended in ringlets to her waiſt. Her figure was rather below than above the middle ſize: it was light and airy as that of an Hamadryad. Her boſom was carefully veiled. Her dreſs was white; it was faſtened by a blue ſaſh, and juſt permitted to peep out from under it a little foot of the moſt delicate proportions. A chaplet of large grains hung upon her arm, and her face was covered with a veil of thick black gauze. Such was the female, to whom the youngeſt of the cavaliers now offered his ſeat, while the other thought it neceſſary to pay the ſame attention to her companion.

The old lady with many expreſſions of gratitude, but without much difficulty, accepted the offer, and ſeated herſelf: the young one followed her example, but made no other compliment than a ſimple and graceful reverence. Don Lorenzo (ſuch was the cavalier's name, whoſe ſeat ſhe had accepted) placed himſelf near her; but firſt he whiſpered a few words in his friend's ear, who immediately took the hint,

hint, and endeavoured to draw off the old woman's attention from her lovely charge.

"You are doubtleſs lately arrived at Madrid," ſaid Lorenzo to his fair neighbour; "it is impoſſible that ſuch charms ſhould have long remained unobſerved; and had not this been your firſt public appearance, the envy of the women and adoration of the men, would have rendered you already ſufficiently remarkable."

He pauſed, in expectation of an anſwer. As his ſpeech did not abſolutely require one, the lady did not open her lips: After a few moments he reſumed his diſcourſe.

"Am I wrong in ſuppoſing you to be a ſtranger to Madrid?"

The lady heſitated; and at laſt, in ſo low a voice as to be ſcarcely intelligible, ſhe made ſhift to anſwer,—"No, Segnor."

"Do you intend making a ſtay of any length?"

"Yes, Segnor."

"I ſhould eſteem myſelf fortunate, were it in my power to contribute to making your abode agreeable. I am well known at Madrid, and my family has ſome intereſt at court. If I can be of any ſervice, you cannot honour or oblige me more than by permitting me to be of uſe to you."—"Surely," ſaid he to himſelf, "ſhe cannot anſwer that by a monoſyllable; now ſhe muſt ſay ſomething to me."

Lorenzo was deceived, for the lady anſwered only by a bow.

By this time he had diſcovered, that his neighbour was not very converſible; but whether her ſilence proceeded from pride, diſcretion,

tion, timidity, or idiotiſm, he was ſtill unable to decide.

After a pauſe of ſome minutes—"It is certainly from your being a ſtranger," ſaid he, "and as yet unacquainted with our cuſtoms, that you continue to wear your veil. Permit me to remove it."

At the ſame time he advanced his hand towards the gauze: the lady raiſed hers to prevent him.

"I never unveil in public, Segnor."

"And where is the harm, I pray you?" interrupted her companion ſomewhat ſharply. Do not you ſee, that the other ladies have all laid their veils aſide, to do honour no doubt to the holy place in which we are? I have taken off mine already; and ſurely, if I expoſe my features to general obſervation, you have no cauſe to put yourſelf in ſuch a wonderful alarm! Bleſſed Maria! Here is a fuſs and a buſtle about a chit's face! Come, come, child! Uncover it! I warrant you that nobody will run away with it from you——"

"Dear aunt, it is not the cuſtom in Murcia——"

"Murcia, indeed! Holy St. Barbara, what does that ſignify? You are always putting me in mind of that villainous province. If it is the cuſtom in Madrid, that is all that we ought to mind; and therefore I deſire you to take off your veil immediately. Obey me this moment, Antonia, for you know that I cannot bear contradiction."

Her niece was ſilent, but made no further oppoſition to Don Lorenzo's efforts, who, armed with the aunt's ſanction, haſtened to remove the gauze. What a ſeraph's head preſented

ſented itſelf to his admiration! Yet it was rather bewitching than beautiful; it was not ſo lovely from regularity of features, as from ſweetneſs and ſenſibility of countenance. The ſeveral parts of her face conſidered ſeparately, many of them were far from handſome; but when examined together, the whole was adorable. Her ſkin, though fair, was not entirely without freckles; her eyes were not very large, nor their laſhes particularly long. But then her lips were of the moſt roſy freſhneſs; her fair and undulating hair, confined by a ſimple ribband, poured itſelf below her waiſt in a profuſion of ringlets; her neck was full and beautiful in the extreme; her hand and arm were formed with the moſt perfect ſymmetry; her mild blue eyes ſeemed an heaven of ſweetneſs, and the cryſtal in which they moved ſparkled with all the brilliance of diamonds. She appeared to be ſcarcely fifteen; an arch ſmile playing round her mouth declared her to be poſſeſt of livelineſs, which exceſs of timidity at preſent repreſſed. She looked round her with a baſhful glance; and whenever her eyes accidentally met Lorenzo's, ſhe dropped them haſtily upon her roſary; her cheek was immediately ſuffuſed with bluſhes, and ſhe began to tell her beads; though her manner evidently ſhowed that ſhe knew not what ſhe was about.

Lorenzo gazed upon her with mingled ſurpriſe and admiration; but the aunt thought it neceſſary to apologize for Antonia's *mauvaiſe honte*.

"'Tis a young creature," ſaid ſhe, "who is totally ignorant of the world. She has been

been brought up in an old caſtle in Murcia, with no other ſociety than her mother's, who, God help her! has no more ſenſe, good ſoul, than is neceſſary to carry her ſoup to her mouth. Yet ſhe is my own ſiſter, both by father and mother."

"And has ſo little ſenſe?" ſaid Don Chriſtoval with feigned aſtoniſhment. "How very extraordinary!"

"Very true, Segnor. Is it not ſtrange? However, ſuch is the fact; and yet only to ſee the luck of ſome people! A young nobleman, of the very firſt quality, took it into his head that Elvira had ſome pretenſions to beauty.—As to pretenſions, in truth ſhe had always enough of *them*; but as to beauty!—If I had only taken half the pains to ſet myſelf off which ſhe did!—But this is neither here nor there. As I was ſaying, Segnor, a young nobleman fell in love with her, and married her unknown to his father. Their union remained a ſecret near three years; but at laſt it came to the ears of the old marquis, who, as you may well ſuppoſe, was not much pleaſed with the intelligence. Away he poſted in all haſte to Cordova, determined to ſeize Elvira, and ſend her away to ſome place or other, where ſhe would never be heard of more. Holy St. Paul! How he ſtormed on finding that ſhe had eſcaped him, had joined her huſband, and that they had embarked together for the Indies! He ſwore at us all, as if the evil ſpirit had poſſeſſed him; he threw my father into priſon—as honeſt a pains-taking ſhoe-maker as any in Cordova; and when he went away, he had the cruelty to take from us my

my ſiſter's little boy, then ſcarcely two years old, and whom in the abruptneſs of her flight ſhe had been obliged to leave behind her. I ſuppoſe that the poor little wretch met with bitter bad treatment from him, for in a few months after we received intelligence of his death."

"Why, this was a moſt terrible old fellow, Segnora!"

"Oh! ſhocking! and a man ſo totally devoid of taſte! Why, would you believe it, Segnor? when I attempted to pacify him, he curſed me for a witch, and wiſhed that, to puniſh the Count, my ſiſter might become as ugly as myſelf! Ugly indeed! I like him for that."

"Ridiculous!" cried Don Chriſtoval. "Doubtleſs the count would have thought himſelf fortunate, had he been permitted to exchange the one ſiſter for the other."

"Oh! Chriſt! Segnor, you are really too polite. However, I am heartily glad that the condé was of a different way of thinking. A mighty pretty piece of buſineſs, to be ſure, Elvira has made of it! After broiling and ſtewing in the Indies for thirteen long years, her huſband dies, and ſhe returns to Spain, without an houſe to hide her head, or money to procure her one! This Antonia was then but an infant, and her only remaining child. She found that her father-in-law had married again, that he was irreconcileable to the condé, and that his ſecond wife had produced him a ſon, who is reported to be a very fine young man. The old marquis refuſed to ſee my ſiſter or her child; but ſent her word that, on condition of never hearing any more of her, he would aſſign her

her a ſmall penſion, and ſhe might live in an old caſtle which he poſſeſſed in Murcia. This had been the favourite habitation of his eldeſt ſon; but ſince his flight from Spain, the old marquis could not bear the place, but let it fall to ruin and confuſion.—My ſiſter accepted the propoſal; ſhe retired to Murcia, and has remained there till within the laſt month."

"And what brings her now to Madrid?" enquired Don Lorenzo, whom admiration of the young Antonia compelled to take a lively intereſt in the talkative old woman's narration.

"Alas! Segnor, her father-in-law being lately dead, the ſteward of his Murcian eſtates has refuſed to pay her penſion any longer. With the deſign of ſupplicating his ſon to renew it, ſhe is now come to Madrid,- but I doubt that ſhe might have ſaved herſelf the trouble. You young noblemen have always enough to do with your money, and are not very often diſpoſed to throw it away upon old women. I adviſed my ſiſter to ſend Antonia with her petition; but ſhe would not hear of ſuch a thing. She is ſo obſtinate! Well! ſhe will find herſelf the worſe for not following my counſels: the girl has a good pretty face, and poſſibly might have done much."

"Ah, Segnora!" interrupted Don Chriſtoval, counterfeiting a paſſionate air; "if a pretty face will do the buſineſs, why has not your ſiſter recourſe to you?"

"Oh! Jeſus! my lord, I ſwear you quite overpower me with your gallantry! But I promiſe you that I am too well aware of the danger of ſuch expeditions to truſt myſelf in a young

young nobleman's power! No, no; I have as yet preſerved my reputation without blemiſh or reproach, and I always knew how to keep the men at a proper diſtance."

"Of that, Segnora, I have not the leaſt doubt. But permit me to aſk you, Have you then any averſion to matrimony?"

"That is an home queſtion. I cannot but confeſs, that if an amiable cavalier was to preſent himſelf——"

Here ſhe intended to throw a tender and ſignificant look upon Don Chriſtoval; but as ſhe unluckily happened to ſquint moſt abominably, the glance fell directly upon his companion. Lorenzo took the compliment to himſelf, and anſwered it by a profound bow.

"May I enquire," ſaid he, "the name of the marquis?"

"The marquis de las Ciſternas."

"I know him intimately well. He is not at preſent in Madrid, but is expected here daily. He is one of the beſt of men; and if the lovely Antonia will permit me to be her advocate with him, I doubt not my being able to make a favourable report of her cauſe."

Antonia raiſed her blue eyes, and ſilently thanked him for the offer by a ſmile of inexpreſſible ſweetneſs. Leonella's ſatisfaction was much more loud and audible. Indeed, as her niece was generally ſilent in her company, ſhe thought it incumbent upon her to talk enough for both: this ſhe managed without difficulty, for ſhe very ſeldom found herſelf deficient in words.

"Oh, Segnor!" ſhe cried; "you will lay our whole family under the moſt ſignal obligations! I accept your offer with all poſſible gratitude,

gratitude, and return you a thouſand thanks for the generoſity of your propoſal. Antonia, why do you not ſpeak, child? While the cavalier ſays all ſort of civil things to you, you ſit like a ſtatue, and never utter a ſyllable of thanks, either bad, good, or indifferent—"

"My dear aunt, I am very ſenſible that—"

"Fye, niece! How often have I told you, that you never ſhould interrupt a perſon who is ſpeaking! When did you ever know me to do ſuch a thing? Are theſe your Murcian manners? Mercy on me! I ſhall never be able to make this girl any thing like a perſon of good breeding. But pray, Segnor," ſhe continued addreſſing herſelf to Don Chriſtoval, "inform me, why ſuch a crowd is aſſembled to-day in this cathedral."

"Can you poſſibly be ignorant, that Ambroſio, abbot of this monaſtry, pronounces a ſermon in this church every Thurſday? All Madrid rings with his praiſes. As yet he has preached but thrice; but all who have heard him are ſo delighted with his eloquence, that it is as difficult to obtain a place at church, as at the firſt repreſentation of a new comedy. His fame certainly muſt have reached your ears?"

"Alas! Segnor, till yeſterday I never had the good fortune to ſee Madrid; and at Cordova we are ſo little informed of what is paſſing in the reſt of the world, that the name of Ambroſio has never been mentioned in its precincts."

"You will find it in every one's mouth at Madrid. He ſeems to have faſcinated the inhabitants; and not having attended his ſermons myſelf, I am aſtoniſhed at the enthuſi-

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aſm which he has excited. The adoration paid him both by young and old, by man and woman, is unexampled. The grandees load him with preſents; their wives refuſe to have any other confeſſor; and he is known through all the city by the name of The Man of Holineſs."

"Undoubtedly, Segnor, he is of noble origin?"

"That point ſtill remains undecided The late ſuperior of the Capuchins found him while yet an infant at the abbey-door. All attempts to diſcover who had left him there were vain, and the child himſelf could give no account of his parents. He was educated in the monaſtery, where he has remained ever ſince. He early ſhowed a ſtrong inclination for ſtudy and retirement; and as ſoon as he was of a proper age, he pronounced his vows. No one has ever appeared to claim him, or clear up the myſtery which conceals his birth; and the monks, who find their account in the favour which is ſhewn to their eſtabliſhment from reſpect to him, have not heſitated to publiſh, that he is a preſent to them from the Virgin. In truth, the ſingular auſterity of his life gives ſome countenance to the report. He is now thirty years old, every hour of which period has been paſſed in ſtudy, total ſecluſion from the world, and mortification of the fleſh. Till theſe laſt three weeks, when he was choſen ſuperior of the ſociety to which he belongs, he had never been on the outſide of the abbey walls. Even now he never quits them except on Thurſdays, when he delivers a diſcourſe in this cathedral, which all Madrid aſſembles to hear. His knowledge is ſaid to be

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aſm which he has excited. The adoration paid him both by young and old, by man and woman, is unexampled. The grandees load him with preſents; their wives refuſe to have any other confeſſor; and he is known through all the city by the name of The Man of Holineſs."

"Undoubtedly, Segnor, he is of noble origin?"

"That point ſtill remains undecided The late ſuperior of the Capuchins found him while yet an infant at the abbey-door. All attempts to diſcover who had left him there were vain, and the child himſelf could give no account of his parents. He was educated in the monaſtery, where he has remained ever ſince. He early ſhowed a ſtrong inclination for ſtudy and retirement; and as ſoon as he was of a proper age, he pronounced his vows. No one has ever appeared to claim him, or clear up the myſtery which conceals his birth; and the monks, who find their account in the favour which is ſhewn to their eſtabliſhment from reſpect to him, have not heſitated to publiſh, that he is a preſent to them from the Virgin. In truth, the ſingular auſterity of his life gives ſome countenance to the report. He is now thirty years old, every hour of which period has been paſſed in ſtudy, total ſecluſion from the world, and mortification of the fleſh. Till theſe laſt three weeks, when he was choſen ſuperior of the ſociety to which he belongs, he had never been on the outſide of the abbey walls. Even now he never quits them except on Thurſdays, when he delivers a diſcourſe in this cathedral, which all Madrid aſſembles to hear. His knowledge is ſaid to be

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the moſt profound, his eloquence the moſt perſuaſive. In the whole courſe of his life he has never been known to tranſgreſs a ſingle rule of his order; the ſmalleſt ſtain is not to be diſcovered upon his character; and he is reported to be ſo ſtrict an obſerver of chaſtity, that he knows not in what conſiſts the difference of man and woman. The common people therefore eſteem him to be a ſaint."

"Does that make a ſaint?" enquired Antonia. "Bleſs me! then am I one."

"Holy St. Barbara!" exclaimed Leonella, "what a queſtion! Fye, child, fye! theſe are not fit ſubjects for young women to handle. You ſhould not ſeem to remember that there is ſuch a thing as a man in the world, and you ought to imagine every body to be of the ſame ſex with yourſelf. I ſhould like to ſee you give people to underſtand, that you know that a man has no breaſts, and no hips, and no——"

Luckily for Antonia's ignorance, which her aunt's lecture would ſoon have diſpelled, an univerſal murmur through the church announced the preacher's arrival. Donna Leonella roſe from her ſeat to take a better view of him, and Antonia followed her example.

He was a man of noble port and commanding preſence. His ſtature was lofty, and his features uncommonly handſome. His noſe was aquiline, his eyes large, black and ſparkling, and his dark brows almoſt joined together. His complexion was of a deep but clear brown; ſtudy and watching had entirely deprived his cheek of colour. Tranquillity reigned upon his ſmooth unwrinkled forehead; and content, expreſſed upon every feature, ſeemed to announce

nounce the man equally unacquainted with cares and crimes. He bowed himself with humility to the audience. Still there was a certain severity in his look and manner that inspired universal awe, and few could sustain the glance of his eye, at once fiery and penetrating. Such was Ambrosio, abbot of the Capuchins, and surnamed "The Man of Holiness."

Antonia, while she gazed upon him eagerly, felt a pleasure fluttering in her bosom which till then had been unknown to her, and for which she in vain endeavoured to account. She waited with impatience till the sermon should begin; and when at length the friar spoke, the sound of his voice seemed to penetrate into her very soul. Though no other of the spectators felt such violent sensations as did the young Antonia, yet every one listened with interest and emotion. They who were insensible to religion's merits, were still enchanted with Ambrosio's oratory. All found their attention irresistibly attracted while he spoke, and the most profound silence reigned through the crowded aisles. Even Lorenzo could not resist the charm: he forgot that Antonia was seated near him, and listened to the preacher with undivided attention.

In language nervous, clear, and simple, the monk expatiated on the beauties of religion. He explained some abstruse parts of the sacred writings in a style that carried with it universal conviction. His voice, at once distinct and deep, was fraught with all the terrors of the tempest, while he inveighed against the vices of humanity, and described the punishments reserved for them in a future state. Every hearer

hearer looked back upon his paſt offences, and trembled: the thunder ſeemed to roll, whoſe bolt was deſtined to cruſh him, and the abyſs of eternal deſtruction to open before his feet! But when Ambroſio, changing his theme, ſpoke of the excellence of an unſullied conſcience, of the glorious proſpect which eternity preſented to the ſoul untainted with reproach, and of the recompenſe which awaited it in the regions of everlaſting glory, his auditors felt their ſcattered ſpirits inſenſibly return. They threw themſelves with confidence upon the mercy of their judge; they hung with delight upon the conſoling words of the preacher; and while his full voice ſwelled into melody, they were tranſported to thoſe happy regions which he painted to their imaginations in colours ſo brilliant and glowing.

The diſcourſe was of conſiderable length: yet, when it concluded, the audience grieved that it had not laſted longer. Though the monk had ceaſed to ſpeak, enthuſiaſtic ſilence ſtill prevailed through the church. At length the charm gradually diſſolving, the general admiration was expreſſed in audible terms. As Ambroſio deſcended from the pulpit, his auditors crowded round him, loaded him with bleſſings, threw themſelves at his feet, and kiſſed the hem of his garment. He paſſed on ſlowly, with his hands croſſed devoutly upon his boſom, to the door opening into the abbey-chapel, at which his monks waited to receive him. He aſcended the ſteps, and then, turning towards his followers, addreſſed to them a few words of gratitude and exhortation. While he ſpoke, his roſary, compoſed of large grains of amber, fell from his hands, and dropped among the ſurrounding multitude.

multitude. It was ſeized eagerly, and immediately divided amidſt the ſpectators. Whoever became a poſſeſſor of a bead, preſerved it as a ſacred relique; and had it been the chaplet of thrice-bleſſed St. Francis himſelf, it could not have been diſputed with greater vivacity. The abbot, ſmiling at their eagerneſs, pronounced his benediction and quitted the church, while humility dwelt upon every feature. Dwelt ſhe alſo in his heart?

Antonia's eyes followed him with anxiety. As the door cloſed after him, it ſeemed to her as ſhe had loſt ſome one eſſential to her happineſs. A tear ſtole in ſilence down her cheek.

"He is ſeparated from the world!" ſaid ſhe to herſelf; "perhaps, I ſhall never ſee him more!"

As ſhe wiped away the tear, Lorenzo obſerved her action.

"Are you ſatisfied with our orator?" ſaid he; "or do you think that Madrid over-rates his talents?"

Antonia's heart was ſo filled with admiration for the monk, that ſhe eagerly ſeized the opportunity of ſpeaking of him: beſides, as ſhe now no longer conſidered Lorenzo as an abſolute ſtranger, ſhe was leſs embarraſſed by her exceſſive timidity.

"Oh! he far exceeds all my expectations," anſwered ſhe; "till this moment I had no idea of the powers of eloquence. But when he ſpoke, his voice inſpired me with ſuch intereſt, ſuch eſteem, I might almoſt ſay ſuch affection for him, that I am myſelf aſtoniſhed at the acuteneſs of my feelings."

Lorenzo ſmiled at the ſtrength of her expreſſions.

"You

"You are young, and juſt entering into life," ſaid he: "your heart, new to the world, and full of warmth and ſenſibility, receives its firſt impreſſions with eagerneſs. Artleſs yourſelf, you ſuſpect not others of deceit; and viewing the world through the medium of your own truth and innocence, you fancy all who ſurround you to deſerve your confidence and eſteem. What pity, that theſe gay viſions muſt ſoon be diſſipated! What pity, that you muſt ſoon diſcover the baſeneſs of mankind, and guard againſt your fellow-creatures as againſt your foes!"

"Alas!" Segnor," replied Antonia, the "misfortunes of my parents have already placed before me but too many ſad examples of the perfidy of the world! Yet ſurely in the preſent inſtance the warmth of ſympathy cannot have deceived me."

"In the preſent inſtance, I allow that it has not. Ambroſio's character is perfectly without reproach; and a man who has paſſed the whole of his life within the walls of a convent, cannot have found the opportunity to be guilty, even were he poſſeſſed of the inclination. But now, when, obliged by the duties of his ſituation, he muſt enter occaſionally into the world, and be thrown into the way of temptation, it is now that it behoves him to ſhow the brilliance of his virtue. The trial is dangerous; he is juſt at that period of life when the paſſions are moſt vigorous, unbridled, and deſpotic; his eſtabliſhed reputation will mark him out to ſeduction as an illuſtrious victim; novelty will give additional charms to the allurements of pleaſure; and even the talents with which nature has endowed him will contribute to his ruin,

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by facilitating the means of obtaining his object. Very few would return victorious from a conteſt ſo ſevere."

"Ah! ſurely Ambroſio will be one of thoſe few."

"O that I have myſelf no doubt: by all accounts he is an exception to mankind in general, and envy would ſeek in vain for a blot upon his character."

"Segnor, you delight me by this aſſurance! It encourages me to indulge my prepoſſeſſion in his favour; and you know not with what pain I ſhould have repreſſed the ſentiment! Ah! deareſt aunt, entreat my mother to chooſe him for our confeſſor."

"I entreat her?" replied Leonella; "I promiſe you that I ſhall do no ſuch thing. I do not like this ſame Ambroſio in the leaſt! he has a look of ſeverity about him that made me tremble from head to foot. Were he my confeſſor, I ſhould never have the courage to avow one half of my peccadilloes, and then I ſhould be in a rare condition! I never ſaw ſuch a ſtern-looking mortal, and hope that I never ſhall ſee ſuch another. His deſcription of the devil, God bleſs us! almoſt terrified me out of my wits, and when he ſpoke about ſinners he ſeemed as if he was ready to eat them."

"You are right, Segnora," anſwered Don Chriſtoval. "Too great ſeverity is ſaid to be Ambroſio's only fault. Exempted himſelf from human failings, he is not ſufficiently indulgent to thoſe of others; and though ſtrictly juſt and diſintereſted in his deciſions, his government of the monks has already ſhown ſome proofs of his inflexibility. But the crowd is nearly diſſi-

pated: will you permit us to attend you home?"

"O Chriſt! Segnor," exclaimed Leonella affecting to bluſh; "I would not ſuffer ſuch a thing for the univerſe! If I came home attended by ſo gallant a cavalier, my ſiſter is ſo ſcrupulous that ſhe would read me an hour's lecture, and I ſhould never hear the laſt of it. Beſides, I rather wiſh you not to make your propoſals juſt at preſent.——"

"My propoſals? I aſſure you, Segnora."

"Oh! Segnor, I believe that your aſſurances of impatience are all very true; but really I muſt deſire a little reſpite. It would not be quite ſo delicate in me to accept your hand at firſt ſight."

"Accept my hand? As I hope to live and breathe——"

"Oh! dear Segnor, preſs me no further if you love me! I ſhall conſider your obedience as a proof of your affection; you ſhall hear from me to-morrow, and ſo farewell. But pray, cavaliers, may I not enquire your names?"

"My friend's," replied Lorenzo, "is the Condé d'Oſſorio, and mine Lorenzo de Medina."

"'Tis ſufficient. Well, Don Lorenzo, I ſhall acquaint my ſiſter with your obliging offer, and let you know the reſult with all expedition. Where may I ſend to you?"

"I am always to be found at the Medina palace."

"You may depend upon hearing from me. Farewell, cavaliers. Segnor Condé, let me entreat you to moderate the exceſſive ardour of your paſſion. However, to prove that I am not diſpleaſed with you, and prevent your abandoning

doning yourſelf to deſpair, receive this mark of my affection, and ſometimes beſtow a thought upon the abſent Leonella."

As ſhe ſaid this, ſhe extended a lean and wrinkled hand; which her ſuppoſed admirer kiſſed with ſuch ſorry grace and conſtraint ſo evident, that Lorenzo with difficulty repreſſed his inclination to laugh. Leonella then haſtened to quit the church: the lovely Antonia followed her in ſilence; but when ſhe reached the porch, ſhe turned involuntarily, and caſt back her eyes towards Lorenzo. He bowed to her, as bidding her farewell; ſhe returned the compliment, and haſtily withdrew.

"So, Lorenzo!" ſaid Don Chriſtoval as ſoon as they were alone, "you have procured me an agreeable intrigue! To favour your deſigns upon Antonia, I obligingly make a few civil ſpeeches which mean nothing to the aunt, and at the end of an hour I find myſelf upon the brink of matrimony! How will you reward me for having ſuffered ſo grievouſly for your ſake? What can repay me for having kiſſed the leathern paw of that confounded old witch? Diavolo! She has left ſuch a ſcent upon my lips, that I ſhall ſmell of garlick for this month to come! As I paſs along the Prado, I ſhall be taken for a walking omelet, or ſome large onion running to ſeed!"

"I confeſs, my poor count," replied Lorenzo, "that your ſervice has been attended with danger; yet am I ſo far from ſuppoſing it to be paſt all endurance, that I ſhall probably ſolicit you to carry on your amours ſtill further."

"From that petition I conclude, that the little Antonia has made ſome impreſſion upon you.

"I cannot expreſs to you how much I am charmed with her. Since my father's death, my uncle the duke de Medina has ſignified to me his wiſhes to ſee me married; I have till now eluded his hints, and refuſed to underſtand them; but what I have ſeen this evening———"

"Well, what have you ſeen this evening? Why ſurely, Don Lorenzo, you cannot be mad enough to think of making a wife out of this grand-daughter of 'as honeſt a pains-taking ſhoemaker as any in Cordova'?"

"You forget, that ſhe is alſo the grand-daughter of the late marquis de las Ciſternas; but without diſputing about birth and titles, I muſt aſſure you that I never beheld a woman ſo intereſting as Antonia."

"Very poſſibly; but you cannot mean to marry her?"

"Why not, my dear condé? I ſhall have wealth enough for both of us, and you know that my uncle thinks liberally upon the ſubject. From what I have ſeen of Raymond de las Ciſternas, I am certain that he will readily acknowledge Antonia for his niece. Her birth therefore will be no objection to my offering her my hand. I ſhould be a villain, could I think of her on any other terms than marriage; and in truth ſhe ſeems poſſeſſed of every quality requiſite to make me happy in a wife—young, lovely, gentle, ſenſible———"

"Senſible? Why, ſhe ſaid nothing but Yes, and No."

"She did not ſay much more, I muſt confeſs—but then ſhe always ſaid Yes or No in the right place.

"Did

"Did she so? Oh! your most obedient! That is using a right lover's argument, and I dare dispute no longer with so profound a casuist. Suppose we adjourn to the comedy?

"It is out of my power. I only arrived last night at Madrid, and have not yet had an opportunity of seeing my sister. You know that her convent is in this street, and I was going thither when the crowd which I saw thronging into this church excited my curiosity to know what was the matter. I shall now pursue my first intention, and probably pass the evening with my sister at the parlour grate.

"Your sister in a convent, say you? Oh! very true, I had forgotten. And how does Donna Agnes? I am amazed, Don Lorenzo, how you could possibly think of immuring so charming a girl within the walls of a cloister!"

"I think of it, Don Christoval? How can you suspect me of such barbarity? You are conscious that she took the veil by her own desire, and that particular circumstances made her wish for a seclusion from the world. I used every means in my power to induce her to change her resolution; the endeavour was fruitless, and I lost a sister!

"The luckier fellow you: I think, Lorenzo, you were a considerable gainer by that loss; if I remember right, Donna Agnes had a portion of ten thousand pistoles, half of which reverted to your lordship. By St. Jago! I wish that I had fifty sisters in the same predicament: I should consent to losing them every soul without much heartburning."

"How, condé?" said Lorenzo in an angry voice; "do you suppose me base enough to have influenced my sister's retirement? do you

ſuppoſe that the deſpicable wiſh to make myſelf maſter of her fortune could ——"

"Admirable! Courage, Don Lorenzo! Now the man is all in a blaze. God grant that Antonia may ſoften that fiery temper, or we ſhall certainly cut each other's throat before the month is over! However, to prevent ſuch a tragical cataſtrophe for the preſent, I ſhall make a retreat and leave you maſter of the field. Farewell, my knight of Mount Ætna! Moderate that inflammable diſpoſition, and remember that, whenever it is neceſſary to make love to yonder harridan, you may reckon upon my ſervices."

He ſaid, and darted out of the cathedral.

"How wild-brained!" ſaid Lorenzo. "With ſo excellent an heart, what pity that he poſſeſſes ſo little ſolidity of judgment!"

The night was now faſt advancing. The lamps were not yet lighted. The faint beams of the riſing moon ſcarcely could pierce through the gothic obſcurity of the church. Lorenzo found himſelf unable to quit the ſpot. The void left in his boſom by Antonia's abſence, and his ſiſter's ſacrifice which Don Chriſtoval had juſt recalled to his imagination, created that melancholy of mind, which accorded but too well with the religious gloom ſurrounding him. He was ſtill leaning againſt the ſeventh column from the pulpit. A ſoft and cooling air breathed along the ſolitary aiſles; the moon-beams darting into the church through painted windows, tinged the fretted roofs and maſſy pillars with a thouſand various ſhades of light and colours. Univerſal ſilence prevailed around, only interrupted by the occaſional cloſing of doors in the adjoining abbey.

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The calm of the hour and ſolitude of the place contributed to nouriſh Lorenzo's diſpoſition to melancholy. He threw himſelf upon a ſeat which ſtood near him, and abandoned himſelf to the deluſions of his fancy. He thought of his union with Antonia; he thought of the obſtacles which might oppoſe his wiſhes; and a thouſand changing viſions floated before his fancy, ſad 'tis true, but not unpleaſing. Sleep inſenſibly ſtole over him, and the tranquil ſolemnity of his mind when awake, for a while continued to influence his ſlumbers.

He ſtill fancied himſelf to be in the church of the Capuchins; but it was no longer dark and ſolitary. Multitudes of ſilver lamps ſhed ſplendour from the vaulted roofs, accompanied by the captivating chaunt of diſtant choriſters, the organ's melody ſwelled through the church; the altar ſeemed decorated as for ſome diſtinguiſhed feaſt; it was ſurrounded by a brilliant company and near it ſtood Antonia arrayed in bridal white, and bluſhing with all the charms of virgin modeſty.

Half hoping, half fearing, Lorenzo gazed upon the ſcene before him. Sudden the door leading to the abbey uncloſed; and he ſaw, attended by a long train of monks, the preacher advance to whom he had juſt liſtened with ſo much admiration. He drew near Antonia.

"And where is the bridegroom?" ſaid the imaginary friar.

Antonia ſeemed to look round the church with anxiety. Involuntarily the youth advanced a few ſteps from his concealment. She ſaw him; the bluſh of pleaſure glowed upon her cheek; with a graceful motion of her hand

ſhe beckoned to him to advance. He diſobeyed not the command; he flew towards her, and threw himſelf at her feet.

She retreated for a moment; then gazing upon him with unutterable delight, "Yes," ſhe exclaimed, "my bridegroom! my deſtined bridegroom!"

She ſaid, and haſtened to throw herſelf into his arms; but before he had time to receive her, an unknown ruſhed between them: his form was gigantic; his complexion was ſwarthy, his eyes fierce and terrible; his mouth breathed out volumes of fire, and on his forehead was written in legible characters——— "Pride! Luſt! Inhumanity!"

Antonia ſhrieked. The monſter claſped her in his arms, and, ſpringing with her upon the altar, tortured her with his odious careſſes. She endeavoured in vain to eſcape from his embrace. Lorenzo flew to her ſuccour; but, ere he had time to reach her, a loud burſt of thunder was heard. Inſtantly the cathedral ſeemed crumbling into pieces; the monks betook themſelves to flight, ſhrieking fearfully; the lamps were extinguiſhed, the altar ſunk down, and in its place appeared an abyſs vomiting forth clouds of flame. Uttering a loud and terrible cry, the monſter plunged into the gulph, and in his fall attempted to drag Antonia with him. He ſtrove in vain. Animated by ſupernatural powers, ſhe diſengaged herſelf from his embrace; but her white robe was left in his poſſeſſion. Inſtantly a wing of brilliant ſplendour ſpread itſelf from either of Antonia's arms. She darted upwards, and while aſcending cried to Lorenzo, "Friend! we ſhall meet above!"

At

At the ſame moment the roof of the cathedral opened; harmonious voices pealed along the vaults; and the glory into which Antonia was received, was compoſed of rays of ſuch dazzling brightneſs, that Lorenzo was unable to ſuſtain the gaze. His ſight failed, and he ſunk upon the ground.

When he awoke he found himſelf extended upon the pavement of the church: it was illuminated, and the chaunt of hymns ſounded from a diſtance. For a while Lorenzo could not perſuade himſelf that what he had juſt witneſſed had been a dream, ſo ſtrong an impreſſion had it made upon his fancy. A little recollection convinced him of its fallacy: the lamps had been lighted during his ſleep, and the muſic which he heard was occaſioned by the monks, who were celebrating their veſpers in the abbey-chapel.

Lorenzo roſe, and prepared to bend his ſteps towards his ſiſter's convent; his mind fully occupied by the ſingularity of his dream. He already drew near the porch, when his attention was attracted by perceiving a ſhadow moving upon the oppoſite wall. He looked curiouſly round, and ſoon deſcried a man wrapped up in his cloak, who ſeemed carefully examining whether his actions were obſerved. Very few people are exempt from the influence of curioſity. The unknown ſeemed anxious to conceal his buſineſs in the cathedral; and it was this very circumſtance which made Lorenzo wiſh to diſcover what he was about.

Our hero was conſcious that he had no right to pry into the ſecrets of this unknown cavalier.

"I will go," ſaid Lorenzo. And Lorenzo ſtayed where he was.

The ſhadow thrown by the column effectually concealed him from the ſtranger, who continued to advance with caution. At length he drew a letter from beneath his cloak, and haſtily placed it beneath a coloſſal ſtatue of St. Francis. Then retiring with precipitation, he concealed himſelf in a part of the church at a conſiderable diſtance from that in which the image ſtood.

"So!" ſaid Lorenzo to himſelf; "this is only ſome fooliſh love affair. I believe, I may as well be gone, for I can do no good in it."

In truth, till that moment it never came into his head that he could do any good in it; but he thought it neceſſary to make ſome little excuſe to himſelf for having indulged his curioſity. He now made a ſecond attempt to retire from the church. For this time he gained the porch without meeting with any impediment; but it was deſtined that he ſhould pay it another viſit that night. As he deſcended the ſteps leading into the ſtreet, a cavalier ruſhed againſt him with ſuch violence, that both were nearly overturned by the concuſſion. Lorenzo put his hand to his ſword.

"How now, Segnor?" ſaid he; what mean you by this rudeneſs?"

"Ha! is it you, Medina?" replied the new comer, whom Lorenzo by his voice now recognized for Don Chriſtoval. "You are the luckieſt fellow in the univerſe, not to have left the church before my return. In, in! my dear lad! they will be here immediately!"

"Who will be here?"

"I

"The old hen and all her pretty little chickens. In, I ſay; and then you ſhall know the whole hiſtory."

Lorenzo followed him into the cathedral, and they concealed themſelves behind the ſtatue of St. Francis.

"And now," ſaid our hero, "may I take the liberty of aſking what is the meaning of all this haſte and rapture?"

"Oh! Lorenzo, we ſhall ſee ſuch a glorious ſight! The prioreſs of St. Clare and her whole train of nuns are coming hither. You are to know, that the pious father Ambroſio [the Lord reward him for it!] will upon no account move out of his own precincts. It being abſolutely neceſſary for every faſhionable convent to have him for its confeſſor, the nuns are in conſequence obliged to viſit him at the abbey; ſince, when the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet muſt needs go to the mountain. Now the prioreſs of St. Clare, the better to eſcape the gaze of ſuch impure eyes as belong to yourſelf and your humble ſervant, thinks proper to bring her holy flock to confeſſion in the duſk: ſhe is to be admitted into the abbey-chapel by yon private door. The portereſs of St. Clare, who is a worthy old ſoul and a particular friend of mine, has juſt aſſured me of their being here in a few moments. There is news for you, you rogue! We ſhall ſee ſome of the prettieſt faces in Madrid!"

"In truth, Chriſtoval, we ſhall do no ſuch thing. The nuns are always veiled."

"No! no! I know better. On entering a place of worſhip, they ever take off their veils, from reſpect to the ſaint to whom 'tis dedicated.

ed. But hark, they are coming! Silence! ſilence! Obſerve, and be convinced."

"Good!" ſaid Lorenzo to himſelf; "I may poſſibly diſcover to whom the vows are addreſſed of this myſterious ſtranger."

Scarcely had Don Chriſtoval ceaſed to ſpeak, when the domina of St. Clare appeared, followed by a long proceſſion of nuns. Each upon entering the church took off her veil. The prioreſs croſſed her hands upon her boſom, and made a profound reverence as ſhe paſſed the ſtatue of St. Francis, the patron of this cathedral. The nuns followed her example, and ſeveral moved onwards without having ſatisfied Lorenzo's curioſity. He almoſt began to deſpair of ſeeing the myſtery cleared up, when, in paying her reſpects to St. Francis, one of the nuns happened to drop her roſary. As ſhe ſtooped to pick it up the light flaſhed full in her face. At the ſame moment ſhe dexterouſly removed the letter from beneath the image, placed it in her boſom, and haſtened to reſume her rank in the proceſſion.

"Ha!" ſaid Chriſtoval in a low voice, "here we have ſome little intrigue, no doubt."

"Agnes, by heaven!" cried Lorenzo.

"What, your ſiſter? Diavolo! Then ſomebody, I ſuppoſe, will have to pay for our peeping."

"And ſhall pay for it without delay," replied the incenſed brother.

The pious proceſſion had now entered the abbey; the door was already cloſed upon it. The unknown immediately quitted his concealment, and haſtened to leave the church: ere he could effect his intention, he deſcried Medina ſtationed in his paſſage. The ſtranger haſtily

haſtily retreated, and drew his hat over his eyes.

"Attempt not to fly me!" exclaimed Lorenzo; "I will know who you are, and what were the contents of that letter."

"Of that letter?" repeated the unknown. "And by what title do you aſk the queſtion?"

"By a title of which I am now aſhamed; but it becomes not you to queſtion me. Either reply circumſtantially to my demands, or anſwer me with your ſword."

"The latter method will be the ſhorteſt," rejoined the other, drawing his rapier: "come "on, Segnor Bravo! I am ready."

Burning with rage, Lorenzo haſtened to the attack: the antagoniſts had already exchanged ſeveral paſſes, before Chriſtoval, who at that moment had more ſenſe than either of them, could throw himſelf between their weapons.

"Hold! hold! Medina!" he exclaimed; "remember the conſequences of ſhedding blood on conſecrated ground!"

The ſtranger immediately dropped his ſword.

"Medina?" he cried. "Great God, is it poſſible! Lorenzo, have you quite forgotten Raymond de las Ciſternas?"

Lorenzo's aſtoniſhment increaſed with every ſucceeding moment. Raymond advanced towards him; but with a look of ſuſpicion he drew back his hand, which the other was preparing to take.

"You here, Marquis? What is the meaning of all this? You engaged in a clandeſtine correſpondence with my ſiſter, whoſe affections——"

"Have

"Have ever been, and ſtill are mine. But this is no fit place for an explanation. Accompany me to my hotel, and you ſhall know every thing. Who is that with you?"

"One whom I believe you to have ſeen before," replied Don Chriſtoval, "though probably not at church."

"The condé d'Oſſorio?"

"Exactly ſo, marquis."

"I have no objection to entruſting you with my ſecret, for I am ſure that I may depend upon your ſilence."

"Then your opinion of me is better than my own, and therefore I muſt beg leave to decline your confidence. Do you go your own way, and I ſhall go mine. Marquis, where are you to be found?"

"As uſual, at the hotel de las Ciſternas; but remember that I am incognito, and that, if you wiſh to ſee me, you muſt aſk for Alphonſo d'Alvarada."

"Good! good! Farewell, cavaliers!" ſaid Don Chriſtoval, and inſtantly departed.

"You, marquis," ſaid Lorenzo in the accent of ſurpriſe; "you, Alphonſo d'Alvarada?"

"Even ſo, Lorenzo: but unleſs you have already heard my ſtory from your ſiſter, I have much to relate that will aſtoniſh you. Follow me, therefore, to my hotel without delay."

At this moment the porter of the Capuchins entered the cathedral to lock up the doors for the night. The two noblemen inſtantly withdrew, and haſtened with all ſpeed to the palace de las Ciſternas.

"Well, Antonia," ſaid the aunt, "as ſoon as ſhe had quitted the church, "what think you

youof our gallants? Don Lorenzo really ſeems a very obliging good ſort of young man: he paid you ſome attention, and nobody knows what may come of it. But as to Don Chriſtoval, I proteſt to you, he is the very phœnix of politeneſs; ſo gallant! ſo well bred! ſo ſenſible, and ſo pathetic! Well! if ever man can prevail upon me to break my vow never to marry, it will be that Don Chriſtoval. You ſee, niece, that every thing turns out exactly as I told you: the very moment that I produced myſelf in Madrid, I knew that I ſhould be ſurrounded by admirers. When I took off my veil, did you ſee, Antonia, what an effect the action had upon the condé? And when I preſented him my hand, did you obſerve the air of paſſion with which he kiſſed it? If ever I witneſſed real love, I then ſaw it impreſſed upon Don Chriſtoval's countenance!"

Now Antonia had obſerved the air with which Don Chriſtoval had kiſſed this ſame hand; but as ſhe drew concluſions from it ſomewhat different from her aunt's, ſhe was wiſe enough to hold her tongue. As this is the only inſtance known of a woman's ever having done ſo, it was judged worthy to be recorded here.

The old lady continued her diſcourſe to Antonia in the ſame ſtrain, till they gained the ſtreet in which was their lodging. Here a crowd collected before their door permitted them not to approach it; and placing themſelves on the oppoſite ſide of the ſtreet, they endeavoured to make out what had drawn all theſe people together. After ſome minutes the crowd formed itſelf into a circle; and now Antonia perceived in the midſt of it a woman

of

of extraordinary height, who whirled herſelf repeatedly round and round, uſing all ſorts of extravagant geſtures. Her dreſs was compoſed of ſhreds of various-coloured ſilks and linens fantaſtically arranged, yet not entirely without taſte. Her head was covered with a kind of turban ornamented with vine-leaves and wild flowers. She ſeemed much ſun-burnt, and her complexion was of a deep olive: her eyes looked fiery and ſtrange; and in her hand ſhe bore a long black rod, with which ſhe at intervals traced a variety of ſingular figures upon the ground, round about which ſhe danced in all the eccentric attitudes of folly and delirium. Suddenly ſhe broke off her dance, whirled herſelf round thrice with rapidity, and after a moment's pauſe ſhe ſung the following ballad:

THE GIPSY's SONG.

COME, croſs my hand! My art ſurpaſſes
All that did ever mortal know:
Come, maidens, come! My magic glaſſes
Your future huſband's form can ſhow:

For 'tis to me the power is given
Uncloſed the book of fate to ſee;
To read the fixed reſolves of heaven,
And dive into futurity.

I guide the pale moon's ſilver waggon;
The winds in magic bonds I hold;
I charm to ſleep the crimſon dragon,
Who loves to watch o'er buried gold.

Fenced round with ſpells, unhurt I venture
Their ſabbath ſtrange where witches keep;
Fearleſs the ſorcerer's circle enter,
And woundleſs tread on ſnakes aſleep.

Lo! here are charms of mighty power!
This makes ſecure an huſband's truth;

And

And this, compoſed at midnight hour,
Will force to love the coldeſt youth:

If any maid too much has granted,
Her loſs this philtre will repair.
This blooms a cheek where red is wanted,
And this will make a brown girl fair;

Then ſilent hear while I diſcover
What I in fortune's mirror view;
And each, when many a year is over,
Shall own the Gipſy's ſayings true.

"Dear aunt!" ſaid Antonia when the ſtranger had finiſhed, "is ſhe not mad?"

"Mad? Not ſhe, child; ſhe is only wicked. She is a gipſy, a ſort of vagabond, whoſe ſole occupation is to run about the country telling lyes, and pilfering from thoſe who come by their money honeſtly. Out upon ſuch vermin! If I were king of Spain, every one of them ſhould be burnt alive, who was found in my dominions after the next three weeks."

Theſe words were pronounced ſo audibly, that they reached the gipſy's ears. She immediately pierced through all the crowd, and made towards the ladies. She ſaluted them thrice in the eaſtern faſhion, and then addreſſed herſelf to Antonia.

THE GIPSY.

Lady, gentle lady! know,
I your future fate can ſhow;
Give your hand, and do not fear;
Lady, gentle lady hear!"

"Deareſt aunt!" ſaid Antonia, "indulge me this once! let me have my fortune told me!"

"Nonſenſe, child! She will tell you nothing but falſehoods."

"No matter; let me at leaſt hear what ſhe has

has to ſay. Do, my dear aunt, oblige me, I beſeech you!"

"Well, well! Antonia, ſince you are ſo bent upon the thing——Here, good woman, you ſhall ſee the hands of both of us. There is money for you, and now let me hear my fortune."

As ſhe ſaid this, ſhe drew off her glove, and preſented her hand. The gipſy looked at it for a moment, and then made this reply:

THE GIPSY.

"Your fortune? You are now ſo old,
Good dame, that 'tis already told:
Yet, for your money, in a trice
I will repay you in advice.
Aſtoniſhed at your childiſh vanity,
Your friends all tax you with inſanity,
And grieve to ſee you uſe your art
To catch ſome youthful lover's heart.
Believe me, dame, when all is done,
Your age will ſtill be fifty-one;
And men will rarely take an hint
Of love from two grey eyes that ſquint.
Take then my counſels; lay aſide
Your paint and patches, luſt and pride,
And on the poor thoſe ſums beſtow,
Which now are ſpent on uſeleſs ſhow.
Think on your Maker, not a ſuitor;
Think on your paſt faults, not on future;
And think Time's ſcythe will quickly mow
The few red hairs, which deck your brow.

The audience rang with laughter during the gipſy's addreſs; and—"fifty-one,"—ſquinting eyes,—red hair,—paint and patches,"—&c. were bandied from mouth to mouth. Leonella was almoſt choaked with paſſion, and loaded her malicious adviſer with the bittereſt reproaches. The ſwarthy propheteſs for ſome time liſtened to her with a contemptuous ſmile:

at

at length she made her a short answer, and then turned to Antonia.

THE GIPSY.

" Peace, lady! What I said was true.
And now, my lovely maid, to you;
Give me your hand, and let me see
Your future doom, and heaven's decree."

In imitation of Leonella, Antonia drew off her glove, and presented her white hand to the gipsy, who, having gazed upon it for some time with a mingled expression of pity and astonishment, pronounced her oracle in the following words:

THE GIPSY.

" Jesus! what a palm is there!
Chaste, and gentle, young and fair,
Perfect mind and form possessing,
You would be some good man's blessing:
But, alas! this line discovers
That destruction o'er you hovers;
Lustful man and crafty devil
Will combine to work your evil;
And from earth by sorrows driven,
Soon your soul must speed to heaven.
Yet your sufferings to delay,
Well remember what I say.
When you one more virtuous see
Than belongs to man to be,
One, whose self no crimes assailing,
Pities not his neighbour's failing,
Call the gipsy's words to mind:
Though he seem so good and kind,
Fair exteriors oft will hide
Hearts that swell with lust and pride.
Lovely maid, with tears I leave you.
Let not my prediction grieve you:
Rather, with submission bending,
Calmly wait distress impending,
And expect eternal bliss
In a better world than this.

Having said this, the gipsy again whirled herself round thrice, and then hastened out of the

the ſtreet with frantic geſture. The crowd followed her; and Elvira's door being now unembarraſſed, Leonella entered the houſe, out of humour with the gipſy, with her niece, and with the people; in ſhort, with every body but herſelf and her charming cavalier. The gipſy's predictions had alſo conſiderably affected Antonia; but the impreſſion ſoon wore off, and in a few hours ſhe had forgotten the adventure, as totally as had it never taken place.

CHAP. II.

Fòrſe ſé tu guſtaſſi una ſòl volta
La milléſima parte délle giòje,
Ché guſta un còr amato riamando,
Direſti ripentita ſoſpirando,
Perduto è tutto il tempo
Ché in amar non ſi ſpènde.

TASSO.

Hadſt thou but taſted once the thouſandth part,
Of joys, which bleſs the loved and loving heart,
Your words repentant and your ſighs would prove,
Loſt is the time which is not paſt in love.

THE monks having attended their abbot to the door of his cell, he diſmiſſed them with an air of conſcious ſuperiority, in which humility's ſemblance combated with the reality of pride.

He was no ſooner alone, than he gave free looſe to the indulgence of his vanity. When he remembered the enthuſiaſm which his diſcourſe had excited, his heart ſwelled with rapture,

ture, and his imagination preſented him with ſplendid viſions of aggrandizement. He looked round him with exultation; and pride told him loudly, that he was ſuperior to the reſt of his fellow-creatures."

"Who," thought he, "who but myſelf has paſſed the ordeal of youth, yet ſees no ſingle ſtain upon his conſcience? Who elſe has ſubdued the violence of ſtrong paſſions and an impetuous temperament, and ſubmitted even from the dawn of life to voluntary retirement? I ſeek for ſuch a man in vain. I ſee no one but myſelf poſſeſſed of ſuch reſolution. Religion cannot boaſt Ambroſio's equal! How powerful an effect did my diſcourſe produce upon its auditors! How they crowded round me! How they loaded me with benedictions, and pronounced me the ſole uncorrupted pillar of the church! What then now is left for me to do? Nothing, but to watch as carefully over the conduct of my brethren, as I have hitherto watched over my own. Yet hold! May I not be tempted from thoſe paths, which till now I have purſued without one moment's wandering? Am I not a man, whoſe nature is frail and prone to error? I muſt now abandon the ſolitude of my retreat; the faireſt and nobleſt dames of Madrid continually preſent themſelves at the abbey, and will uſe no other confeſſor. I muſt accuſtom my eyes to objects of temptation, and expoſe myſelf to the ſeduction of luxury and deſire. Should I meet in that world which I am conſtrained to enter, ſome lovely female, —lovely as you—Madona—!"

As he ſaid this, he fixed his eyes upon a picture of the Virgin, which was ſuſpended oppoſite to him: this for two years had been the

the object of his increasing wonder and adoration. He paused, and gazed upon it with delight.

"What beauty in that countenance!" he continued after a silence of some minutes; "how graceful is the turn of that head! what sweetness, yet what majesty in her divine eyes! how softly her cheek reclines upon her hand! Can the rose vie with the blush of that cheek? can the lily rival the whiteness of that hand? Oh! if such a creature existed, and existed but for me! were I permitted to twine round my fingers those golden ringlets, and press with my lips the treasures of that snowy bosom! gracious God, should I then resist the temptation? Should I not barter for a single embrace the reward of my sufferings for thirty years? Should I not abandon——Fool that I am! Whither do I suffer my admiration of this picture to hurry me? Away, impure ideas! Let me remember, that woman is for ever lost to me. Never was mortal formed so perfect as this picture. But even did such exist, the trial might be too mighty for a common virtue; but Ambrosio's is proof against temptation. Temptation, did I say? To me it would be none. What charms me, when ideal and considered as a superior being, would disgust me, become woman and tainted with all the failings of mortality. It is not the woman's beauty that fills me with such enthusiasm: it is the painter's skill that I admire; it is the Divinity that I adore. Are not the passions dead in my bosom? have I not freed myself from the frailty of mankind? Fear not, Ambrosio! Take confidence in the strength of your virtue.

Enter

Enter boldly into the world, to whoſe failings you are ſuperior; reflect that you are now exempted from humanity's defects, and defy all the arts of the ſpirits of darkneſs. They ſhall know you for what you are!"

Here his reverie was interrupted by three ſoft knocks at the door of his cell. With difficulty did the abbot awake from his delirium. The knocking was repeated.

"Who is there?" ſaid Ambroſio at length.

"It is only Roſario," replied a gentle voice.

"Enter! enter, my ſon!"

The door was immediately opened, and Roſario appeared with a ſmall baſket in his hand.

Roſario was a young novice belonging to the monaſtery, who in three months intended to make his profeſſion. A ſort of myſtery enveloped this youth, which rendered him at once an object of intereſt and curioſity. His hatred of ſociety, his profound melancholy, his rigid obſervation of the duties of his order, and his voluntary ſeclusion from the world, at his age ſo unuſual, attracted the notice of the whole fraternity. He ſeemed fearful of being recogniſed, and no one had ever ſeen his face. His head was continually muffled up in his cowl; yet ſuch of his features as accident diſcovered, appeared the moſt beautiful and noble. Roſario was the only name by which he was known in the monaſtery. No one knew from whence he came, and when queſtioned on the ſubject he preſerved a profound ſilence. A ſtranger, whoſe rich habit and magnificent equipage declared him to be of diſtinguiſhed rank, had engaged the monks to receive a novice, and had depoſited the neceſſary ſums. The next day

day he returned with Roſario, and from that time no more had been heard of him.

The youth had carefully avoided the company of the monks; he anſwered their civilities with ſweetneſs, but reſerve, and evidently ſhowed that his inclination led him to ſolitude. To this general rule the ſuperior was the only exception. To him he looked up with a reſpect approaching idolatry: he ſought his company with the moſt attentive aſſiduity, and eagerly ſeized every means to ingratiate himſelf in his favour. In the abbot's ſociety his heart ſeemed to be at eaſe, and an air of gaiety pervaded his whole manners and diſcourſe. Ambroſio on his ſide did not feel leſs attracted towards the youth; with him alone did he lay aſide his habitual ſeverity. When he ſpoke to him, he inſenſibly aſſumed a tone milder than was uſual to him; and no voice ſounded ſo ſweet to him as did Roſario's. He repaid the youth's attentions by inſtructing him in various ſcenes; the novice received his leſſons with docility; Ambroſio was every day more charmed with the vivacity of his genius, the ſimplicity of his manners, and the rectitude of his heart: in ſhort, he loved him with all the affection of a father. He could not help ſometimes indulging a deſire ſecretly to ſee the face of his pupil; but his rule of ſelf denial extended even to curioſity, and prevented him from communicating his wiſhes to the youth.

"Pardon my intruſion, father," ſaid Roſario, while he placed his baſket upon the table; "I come to you a ſupplicant. Hearing that a dear friend is dangerouſly ill, I entreat your prayers for his recovery. If ſupplications

can

prevail upon heaven to ſpare him, ſurely yours muſt be efficacious."

"Whatever depends upon me, my ſon, you know that you may command. What is your friend's name?"

"Vincentio della Ronda."

"'Tis ſufficient. I will not forget him in my prayers, and may our thrice-bleſſed St. Francis deign to liſten to my interceſſion!—What have you in your baſket, Roſario?

"A few of thoſe flowers, reverend father, which I have obſerved to be moſt acceptable to you. Will you permit my arranging them in your chamber?"

"Your attentions charm me, my ſon."

While Roſario diſperſed the contents of his baſket in ſmall vaſes, placed for that purpoſe in various parts of the room, the abbot thus continued the converſation:

"I ſaw you not in the church this evening, Roſario."

"Yet I was preſent, father. I am too grateful for your protection to loſe an opportunity of witneſſing your triumph."

"Alas! Roſario, I have but little cauſe to triumph; the ſaint ſpoke by my mouth; to him belongs all the merit. It ſeems then you were contented with my diſcourſe?"

"Contented, ſay you? Oh! you ſurpaſſed yourſelf! Never did I hear ſuch eloquence—ſave once!"

Here the novice heaved an involuntary ſigh.

"When was that once?" demanded the abbot.

"When you preached upon the ſudden indiſpoſition of our late ſuperior."

"I remember it: that is more than two years ago. And were you preſent? I knew you not at that time, Roſario."

"'Tis true, father; and would to God I had expired ere I beheld that day! What ſufferings, what ſorrows, ſhould I have eſcaped!"

"Sufferings at your age, Roſario?"

"Aye, father; ſufferings, which if known to you, would equally riſe your anger and compaſſion! Sufferings, which form at once the torment and pleaſure of my exiſtence! Yet in this retreat my boſom would feel tranquil, were it not for the tortures of apprehenſion. Oh God! oh God! how cruel is a life of fear! —Father! I have given up all; I have abandoned the world and its delights for ever; nothing now remains, nothing now has charms for me, but your friendſhip, but your affection. If I loſe that father! oh! if I loſe that, tremble at the effects of my deſpair!"

"You apprehend the loſs of my friendſhip? How has my conduct juſtified this fear? Know me better, Roſario, and think me worthy of your confidence. What are your ſufferings? Reveal them to me, and believe that if 'tis in my power to relieve them——"

"Ah! 'tis in no one's power but your's. Yet I muſt not let you know them. You would hate me for my avowal! you would drive me from your preſence with ſcorn and ignominy."

"My ſon, I conjure you! I entreat you—"

"For pity's ſake enquire no further! I muſt not——I dare not——Hark! the bell rings for veſpers! Father, your benediction, and I leave you."

As

As he ſaid this he threw himſelf upon his knees, and received the bleſſing that he demanded. Then preſſing the abbot's hand to his lips, he ſtarted from the ground, and haſtily quitted the apartment. Soon after Ambroſio deſcended to veſpers (which were celebrated in a ſmall chapel belonging to the abbey), filled with ſurpriſe at the ſingularity of the youth's behaviour.

Veſpers being over, the monks retired to their reſpective cells. The abbot alone remained in the chapel to receive the nuns of St. Clair. He had not been long ſeated in the confeſſional chair, before the prioreſs made her appearance. Each of the nuns was heard in her turn, while the others waited with the domina in the adjoining veſtry. Ambroſio liſtened to the confeſſions with attention, made many exhortations, enjoined penance proportioned to each offence, and for ſome time every thing went on as uſual: till at laſt one of the nuns conſpicuous from the nobleneſs of her air and elegance of her figure, careleſsly permitted a letter to fall from her boſom. She was retiring unconſcious of her loſs. Ambroſio ſuppoſed it to have been written by ſome one of her relations, and picked it up, intending to reſtore it to her.

"Stay, daughter," ſaid he; "you have let fall ——"

At this moment, the paper being already open, his eye involuntarily read the firſt words. He ſtarted back with ſurpriſe. The nun had turned round on hearing his voice: ſhe perceived her letter in his hand, and, uttering a ſhriek of terror, flew haſtily to regain it.

"Hold!" ſaid the friar in a tone of ſeverity; "daughter, I muſt read this letter."

"Then I am loſt!" ſhe exclaimed, claſping her hands together wildly.

All colour inſtantly faded from her face; ſhe trembled with agitation, and was obliged to fold her arms round a pillar of the chapel to ſave herſelf from ſinking upon the floor. In the mean while the abbot read the following lines:

"All is ready for your eſcape, my deareſt Agnes! At twelve to-morrow night I ſhall expect to find you at the garden-door: I have obtained the key, and a few hours will ſuffice to place you in a ſecure aſylum. Let no miſtaken ſcruples induce you to reject the certain means of preſerving yourſelf and the innocent creature whom you nouriſh in your boſom. Remember that you had promiſed to be mine, long ere you engaged yourſelf to the church; that your ſituation will ſoon be evident to the prying eyes of your companions; and that flight is the only means of avoiding the effects of their malevolent reſentment. Farewell, my Agnes! my dear and deſtined wife! Fail not to be at the garden-door at twelve!"

As ſoon as he had finiſhed, Ambroſia bent an eye ſtern and angry upon the imprudent nun.

"This letter muſt to the prioreſs," ſaid he, and paſſed her.

His words ſounded like thunder to her ears: ſhe awoke from her torpidity only to be ſenſible of the dangers of her ſituation. She followed

lowed him haſtily, and detained him by his garment.

"Stay! oh! ſtay!" ſhe cried in the accents of deſpair, while ſhe threw herſelf at the friar's feet, and bathed them with her tears. "Father, compaſſionate my youth! Look with indulgence on a woman's weakneſs, and deign to conceal my frailty! The remainder of my life ſhall be employed in expiating this ſingle fault, and your lenity will bring back a ſoul to heaven!"

"Amazing confidence! What! ſhall St. Clare's convent become the retreat of proſtitutes? Shall I ſuffer the church of Chriſt to cheriſh in its boſom debauchery and ſhame? Unworthy wretch! ſuch lenity would make me your accomplice. Mercy would here be criminal. You have abandoned yourſelf to a ſeducer's luſt; you have defiled the ſacred habit by your impunity; and ſtill dare you think yourſelf deſerving my compaſſion? Hence, nor detain me longer. Where is the lady prioreſs?" he added, raiſing his voice.

"Hold! father, hold! Hear me but for one moment! Tax me not with impunity, nor think that I have erred from the warmth of temperament. Long before I took the veil, Raymond was maſter of my heart; he inſpired me with the pureſt, the moſt irreproachable paſſion, and was on the point of becoming my lawful huſband. An horrible adventure, and the treachery of a relation, ſeparated us from each other. I believed him for ever loſt to me, and threw myſelf into a convent from motives of deſpair. Accident again united us; I could not refuſe myſelf the melancholy pleaſure of mingling my tears with his. We met

nightly in the gardens of St. Clare, and in an unguarded moment I violated my vows of chaſtity. I ſhall ſoon become a mother. Reverend Ambroſia take compaſſion on me; take compaſſion on the innocent being whoſe exiſtence is attached to mine. If you diſcover my imprudence to the domina, both of us are loſt. The puniſhment which the laws of St. Clare aſſign to unfortunates like myſelf, is moſt ſevere and cruel. Worthy, worthy father! let not your own untainted conſcience render you unfeeling towards thoſe leſs able to withſtand temptation! Let not mercy be the only virtue of which your heart is unſuſceptible! Pity me, moſt reverend! Reſtore my letter, nor doom me to inevitable deſtruction!"

"Your boldneſs confounds me. Shall *I* conceal your crime—*I* whom you have deceived by your feigned confeſſion?———No, daughter, no. I will render you a more eſſential ſervice. I will reſcue you from perdition, in ſpite of yourſelf. Penance and mortification ſhall expiate your offence, and ſeverity force you back to the paths of holineſs. What, ho! Mother St. Agatha!"

"Father! by all that is ſacred, by all that is moſt dear to you, I ſupplicate, I entreat——"

"Releaſe me. I will not hear you. Where is the domina? Mother St. Agatha, where are you?"

The door of the veſtry opened, and the prioreſs entered the chapel, followed by her nuns.

"Cruel, cruel!" exclaimed Agnes, relinquiſhing her hold.

Wild and deſperate, ſhe threw herſelf upon the ground, beating her boſom, and rending her

her veil in all the delirium of deſpair. The nuns gazed with aſtoniſhment upon the ſcene before them. The friar now preſented the fatal paper to the prioreſs, informed her of the manner in which he had found it, and added, that it was her buſineſs to decide what penance the delinquent merited.

While ſhe peruſed the letter, the domina's countenance grew inflamed with paſſion. What! ſuch a crime committed in her convent, and made known to Ambroſio, to the idol of Madrid, to the man whom ſhe was moſt anxious to impreſs with the opinion of the ſtrictneſs and regularity of her houſe! Words were inadequate to expreſs her fury. She was ſilent, and darted upon the proſtrate nun looks of menace and malignity.

"Away with her to the convent!" ſaid ſhe at length to ſome of her attendants.

Two of the oldeſt nuns now approaching Agnes, raiſed her forcibly from the ground, and prepared to conduct her from the chapel.

"What!" ſhe exclaimed ſuddenly, ſhaking off their hold with diſtracted geſtures, "is all hope then loſt? Already do you drag me to puniſhment? Where are you, Raymond? Oh! ſave me! ſave me!" Then caſting upon the abbot a frantic look, "Hear me!" ſhe continued, "man of an hard heart! Hear me, proud, ſtern and cruel! You could have ſaved me; you could have reſtored me to happineſs and virtue, but would not; you are the deſtroyer of my ſoul; you are my murderer, and on you falls the curſe of my death and my unborn infant's! Inſolent in your yet unſhaken virtue, you diſdained the prayers of a penitent; but God will ſhew mercy, though you

ſhew none. And where is the merit of your boaſted virtue? What temptations have you vanquiſhed? Coward! you have fled from it, not oppoſed ſeduction. But the day of trial will arrive. Oh! then when you yield to impetuous paſſions; when you feel that man is weak, and born to err; when ſhuddering you look back upon your crimes, and ſolicit with terror, the mercy of your God, oh! in that fearful moment think upon me! think upon your cruelty! think upon Agnes, and deſpair of pardon."

As ſhe uttered theſe laſt words, her ſtrength was exhauſted, and ſhe ſunk inanimate upon the boſom of a nun who ſtood near her. She was immediately conveyed from the chapel, and her companions followed her.

Ambroſio had not liſtened to her reproaches without emotion. A ſecret pang at his heart made him feel that he had treated this unfortunate with too great ſeverity. He therefore detained the prioreſs, and ventured to pronounce ſome words in favour of the delinquent.

"The violence of her deſpair," ſaid he, "proves that at leaſt vice is not become familiar to her. Perhaps by treating her with ſomewhat leſs rigour than is generally practiſed, and mitigating in ſome degree the accuſtomed penance——"

"Mitigate it, father?" interrupted the lady prioreſs: "Not I, believe me. The laws of our order are ſtrict and ſevere; they have fallen into diſuſe of late; but the crime of Agnes ſhews me the neceſſity of their revival. I go to ſignify my intention to the convent, and Agnes ſhall be the firſt to feel the rigour of thoſe

thoſe laws, which ſhall be obeyed to the very letter. Father, farewell!"

Thus ſaying, ſhe haſtened out of the chapel.

"I have done my duty," ſaid Ambroſio to himſelf.

Still did he not appear perfectly ſatisfied by this reflection. To diſſipate the unpleaſant ideas which this ſcene had excited in him, upon quitting the chapel he deſcended into the abbey-garden. In all Madrid there was no ſpot more beautiful, or better regulated. It was laid out with the moſt exquiſite taſte; the choiceſt flowers adorned it in the height of luxuriance, and, though artfully arranged, ſeemed only planted by the hand of Nature. Fountains, ſpringing from baſons of white marble, cooled the air with perpetual ſhowers; and the walls were entirely covered by jeſſamine, vines, and honey-ſuckles. The hour now added to the beauty of the ſcene. The full moon, ranging through a blue and cloudleſs ſky, ſhed upon the trees a trembling luſtre, and the waters of the fountains ſparkled in the ſilver beam; a gentle breeze breathed the fragrance of orange-bloſſoms along the alleys, and the nightingale poured forth her melodious murmur from the ſhelter of an artificial wilderneſs. Thither the abbot bent his ſteps.

In the boſom of this little grove ſtood a ruſtic grotto, formed in imitation of an hermitage. The walls were conſtructed of roots of trees, and the interſtices filled up with moſs and ivy. Seats of turf were placed on either ſide, and a natural caſcade fell from the rock above. Buried in himſelf, the monk approach-

ed the ſpot. The univerſal calm had communicated itſelf to his boſom, and a voluptuous tranquillity ſpread languor through his ſoul.

He reached the hermitage, and was entering to repoſe himſelf, when he ſtopped on perceiving it to be already occupied. Extended upon one of the banks lay a man in a melancholy poſture. His head was ſupported upon his arm, and he ſeemed loſt in meditation. The monk drew nearer, and recogniſed Roſario: he watched him in ſilence, and entered not the hermitage. After ſome minutes the youth raiſed his eyes, and fixed them mournfully upon the oppoſite wall.

"Yes," ſaid he, with a deep and plaintive ſigh, "I feel all the happineſs of thy ſituation, all the miſery of my own. Happy were I, could I think like thee! Could I look like thee with diſguſt upon mankind, could bury myſelf for ever in ſome impenetrable ſolitude, and forget that the world holds beings deſerving to be loved! O God! what a bleſſing would miſanthropy be to me!"

"That is a ſingular thought, Roſario," ſaid the abbot, entering the grotto.

"You here, reverend father?" cried the novice.

At the ſame time ſtarting from his place in confuſion, he drew his cowl haſtily over his face. Ambroſio ſeated himſelf upon the bank, and obliged the youth to place himſelf by him.

"You muſt not indulge this diſpoſition to melancholy," ſaid he: "What can poſſibly have made you view in ſo deſirable a light, miſanthropy, of all ſentiments the moſt hateful?"

"The peruſal of theſe verſes, father, which till

till now had eſcaped my obſervation. The brightneſs of the moon-beams permitted my reading them; and, oh! how I envy the feelings of the writer!"

As he ſaid this, hepointed to a marble tablet fixed againſt the oppoſite wall: on it were engraved the following lines:

INSCRIPTION IN AN HERMITAGE.

Whoe'er thou art theſe lines now reading,
Think not, though from the world receding,
I joy my lonely days to lead in
This deſert drear,
That with remorſe a conſcience bleeding
Hath led me here.

No thought of guilt my boſom ſours:
Free-willed I fled from courtly bowers;
For well I ſaw in halls and towers,
That Luſt and Pride,
The Arch-fiend's deareſt darkeſt powers,
In ſtate preſide.

I ſaw mankind with vice incruſted;
I ſaw that Honour's ſword was ruſted;
That few for aught but folly luſted;
That he was ſtill deceiv'd, who truſted
In love or friend;
And hither came, with men diſguſted,
My life to end.

In this lone cave, in garments lowly,
Alike a foe to noiſy folly
And brow-bent gloomy melancholy,
I wear away
My life, and in my office holy
Conſume the day.

Content and comfort bleſs me more in
This grot, than e'er I felt before in
A palace; and with thoughts ſtill ſoaring
To God on high,
Each night and morn with voice imploring
This wiſh I ſigh:

"Let me, O Lord! from life retire,
Unknown each guilty worldly fire,
Remorſeful throb, or looſe deſire

And

And when I die,
Let me in this belief expire,
To God I fly!"

Stranger, if, full of youth and riot,
As yet no grief has marred thy quiet,
Thou haply throw'ſt a ſcornful eye at
The Hermit's prayer:
But if thou haſt a cauſe to ſigh at
Thy faults, or care;

If thou haſt known falſe love's vexation,
Or haſt been exil'd from thy nation,
Or guilt affrights thy contemplation,
And makes thee pine;
Oh! how muſt thou lament *thy* ſtation,
And envy mine!

"Were it poſſible," ſaid the friar, "for man to be ſo totally wrapped up in himſelf as to live in abſolute ſeclusion from human nature, and could yet feel the contented tranquillity which theſe lines expreſs, I allow that the ſituation would be more deſirable, than to live in a world ſo pregnant with every vice and every folly. But this never can be the caſe. This inſcription was merely placed here for the ornament of the grotto, and the ſentiments and the hermit are equally imaginary. Man was born for ſociety. However little he may be attached to the world, he never can wholly forget it, or bear to be wholly forgotten by it. Diſguſted at the guilt or abſurdity of mankind, the miſanthrope flies from it; he reſolves to become an hermit, and buries himſelf in the cavern of ſome gloomy rock. While hate inflames his boſom, poſſibly he may feel contented with his ſituation: but when his paſſions begin to cool; when Time has mellowed his ſorrows, and healed thoſe wounds which he bore with him to his ſolitude, think you that Content becomes his companion? Ah! no,

Roſario

Roſario. No longer ſuſtained by the violence of his paſſions, he feels all the monotony of his way of living, and his heart becomes the prey of ennui and wearineſs. He looks round, and finds himſelf alone in the univerſe: the love of ſociety revives in his boſom, and he pants to return to that world which he has abandoned. Nature loſes all her charms in his eyes: no one is near him to point out her beauties, or ſhare in his admiration of her excellence and variety. Propped upon the fragment of ſome rock, he gazes upon the tumbling water-fall with a vacant eye; he views, without emotion, the glory of the ſetting ſun. Slowly he returns to his cell at evening, for no one there is anxious for his arrival; he has no comfort in his ſolitary, unſavoury meal: he throws himſelf upon his couch of moſs deſpondent and diſſatisfied, and wakes only to paſs a day as joyleſs, as monotonous as the former."

"You amaze me, father! Suppoſe that circumſtances condemned you to ſolitude; would not the duties of religion, and the conſciouſneſs of a life well ſpent, communicate to your heart that calm which——"

"I ſhould deceive myſelf, did I fancy that they could. I am convinced of the contrary, and that all my fortitude would not prevent me from yielding to melancholy and diſguſt. After conſuming the day in ſtudy, if you knew my pleaſure at meeting my brethren in the evening! After paſſing many a long hour in ſolitude, if I could expreſs to you the joy which I feel at once more beholding a fellow-creature! 'Tis in this particular that I place the principal merit of a monaſtic inſtitution. It ſecludes man from the temptations of vice; it procures that leiſure

leiſure neceſſary for the proper ſervice of the Supreme; it ſpares him the mortification of witneſſing the crimes of the worldly, and yet permits him to enjoy the bleſſings of ſociety. And do you, Roſario, do you envy an hermit's life? Can you be thus blind to the happineſs of your ſituation? Reflect upon it for a moment. This abbey is become your aſylum: your regularity, your gentleneſs, your talents have rendered you the object of univerſal eſteem: you are ſecluded from the world which you profeſs to hate; yet you remain in poſſeſſion of the benefits of ſociety, and that a ſociety compoſed of the moſt eſtimable of mankind."

"Father! father! 'tis that which cauſes my torment. Happy had it been for me, had my life been paſſed among the vicious and abandoned; had I never heard pronounced the name of virtue. 'Tis my unbounded adoration of religion; 'tis my ſoul's exquiſite ſenſibility of the beauty of fair and good, that loads me with ſhame—that hurries me to perdition. Oh! that I had never ſeen theſe abbey walls!"

"How, Roſario? when we laſt converſed, you ſpoke in a different tone. Is my friendſhip then become of ſuch little conſequence? Had you never ſeen theſe abbey-walls, you never had ſeen me. Can that really be your wiſh?"

"Had never ſeen you?" repeated the novice, ſtarting from the bank, and graſping the friar's hand with a frantic air—"You! you! Would to God that lightning had blaſted them before you ever met my eyes! Would to God that I were never to ſee you more, and could forget that I had ever ſeen you!"

With theſe words he flew haſtily from the grotto. Ambroſio remained in his former attitude,

titude, reflecting on the youth's unaccountable behaviour. He was inclined to ſuſpect the derangement of his ſenſes: yet the general tenor of his conduct, the connexion of his ideas, and calmneſs of his demeanour till the moment of his quiting the grotto, ſeemed to diſcountenance his conjecture. After a few minutes Roſario returned. He again ſeated himſelf upon the bank: he reclined his cheek upon one hand, and with the other wiped away the tears which trickled from his eyes at intervals.

The monk looked upon him with compaſſion, and forbore to interrupt his meditations. Both obſerved for ſome time a profound ſilence. The nightingale had now taken her ſtation upon an orange-tree fronting the hermitage, and poured forth a ſtrain the moſt melancholy and melodious. Roſario raiſed his head, and liſtened to her with attention.

"It was thus," ſaid he, with a deep drawn ſigh, "it was thus that, during the laſt month of her unhappy life, my ſiſter uſed to ſit liſtening to the nightingale. Poor Matilda! ſhe ſleeps in the grave, and her broken heart throbs no more with paſſion."

"You had a ſiſter?"

"You ſay right, that I *had*. Alas! I have one no longer. She ſunk beneath the weight of her ſorrows in the very ſpring of life."

"What were thoſe ſorrows?"

"They will not excite *your* pity. *You* know not the power of theſe irreſiſtible, thoſe fatal ſentiments to which her heart was a prey. Father, ſhe loved unfortunately. A paſſion for one endowed with every virtue, for a man—— oh! rather let me ſay for a divinity—proved the

the bane of her exiſtence. His noble form, his ſpotleſs character, his various talents, his wiſdom ſolid, wonderful, and glorious, might have warmed the boſom of the moſt inſenſible. My ſiſter ſaw him, and dared to love, though ſhe never dared to hope."

"If her love was ſo well beſtowed, what forbad her to hope the obtaining of its object?"

"Father, before he knew her, Julian had already plighted his vows to a bride moſt fair, moſt heavenly! Yet ſtill my ſiſter loved, and for the huſband's ſake ſhe doated upon the wife. One morning ſhe found means to eſcape from our father's houſe: arrayed in humble weeds ſhe offered herſelf as a domeſtic to the conſort of her beloved, and was accepted. She was now continually in his preſence: ſhe ſtrove to ingratiate herſelf into his favour: ſhe ſucceeded. Her attentions attracted Julian's notice: the virtuous are ever grateful, and he diſtinguiſhed Matilda above the reſt of her companions."

"And did not your parents ſeek for her? Did they ſubmit tamely to their loſs, nor attempt to recover their wandering daughter?"

"Ere they could find her, ſhe diſcovered herſelf. Her love grew too violent for concealment; yet ſhe wiſhed not for Julian's perſon, ſhe ambitioned but a ſhare of his heart. In an unguarded moment ſhe confeſſed her affection. What was the return? Doating upon his wife, and believing that a look of pity beſtowed upon another was a theft from what he owed to her, he drove Matilda from his preſence: he forbad her ever again appearing before

fore him. His ſeverity broke her heart: ſhe returned to her father's, and in a few months after was carried to her grave."

"Unhappy girl! Surely her fate was too ſevere, and Julian was too cruel."

"Do you think ſo, father?" cried the novice with vivacity: "Do you think that he was cruel?"

"Doubtleſs I do, and pity her moſt ſincerely."

"You pity her? you pity her? Oh! father! father! then pity me—"

The friar ſtarted; when after a moment's pauſe, Roſario added with a faltering voice, "for my ſufferings are ſtill greater. My ſiſter had a friend, a real friend, who pitied the acuteneſs of her feelings, nor reproached her with her inability to repreſs them. I—! I have no friend! The whole wide world cannot furniſh a heart that is willing to participate in the ſorrows of mine."

As he uttered theſe words he ſobbed audibly. The friar was affected. He took Roſario's hand, and preſſed it with tenderneſs.

"You have no friend, ſay you? What then am I? Why will you not confide in me, and what can you fear? My ſeverity? Have I ever uſed it with you? The dignity of my habit? Roſario, I lay aſide the monk, and bid you conſider me as no other than your friend, your father. Well may I aſſume that title, for never did parent watch over a child more fondly than I have watched over you. From the moment in which I firſt beheld you, I perceived ſenſations in my boſom till then unknown to me; I found a delight in your ſociety which no one's elſe could afford; and when I witneſſed

neſſed the extent of your genius and information, I rejoiced as does a father in the perfections of his ſon. Then lay aſide your fears; ſpeak to me with openneſs: ſpeak to me, Roſario, and ſay that you will confide in me. If my aid or my pity can alleviate your diſtreſs———"

"Yours can; yours only can. Ah! father, how willingly would I unveil to you my heart! how willingly would I declare the ſecret which bows me down with its weight! But oh! I fear, I fear——"

"What, my ſon?

"That you ſhould abhor me for my weakneſs; that the reward of my confidence ſhould be the loſs of your eſteem."

"How ſhall I reaſſure you? Reflect upon the whole of my paſt conduct, upon the paternal tenderneſs which I have ever ſhown you. Abhor you, Roſario? It is no longer in my power. To give up your ſociety would be to deprive myſelf of the greateſt pleaſure of my life. Then reveal to me what afflicts you, and believe me while I ſolemnly ſwear—"

"Hold!" interrupted the novice. "Swear, that whatever be my ſecret, you will not oblige me to quit the monaſtery till my noviciate ſhall expire."

"I promiſe it faithfully; and as I keep my vows to you, may Chriſt keep his to mankind! Now then explain this myſtery, and rely upon my indulgence."

"I obey you. Know then—Oh! how I tremble to name the word! Liſten to me with pity, reverend Ambroſio! call up every latent ſpark of human weakneſs that may teach you compaſſion for mine! Father!" continued he, throwing

throwing himſelf at the friar's feet, and preſſing his hand to his lips with eagerneſs, while agitation for a moment choaked his voice; father! continued he in faltering accents, "I am a woman!"

The abbot ſtarted at this unexpected avowal. Proſtrate on the ground lay the feigned Roſario, as if waiting in ſilence the deciſion of his judge. Aſtoniſhment on the one part, apprehenſion on the other, for ſome minutes chained them in the ſame attitudes, as they had been touched by the rod of ſome magician. At length recovering from his confuſion, the monk quitted the grotto, and ſped with precipitation towards the abbey. His action did not eſcape the ſuppliant. She ſprang from the ground; ſhe haſtened to follow him, overtook him, threw herſelf in his paſſage, and embraced his knees. Ambroſio ſtrove in vain to diſengage himſelf from her graſp.

"Do not fly me!" ſhe cried. Leave me not abandoned to the impulſe of deſpair! Liſten, while I excuſe my imprudence; while I acknowledge my ſiſter's ſtory to be my own! I am Matilda; you are her beloved."

If Ambroſio's ſurpriſe was great at her firſt avowal, upon hearing her ſecond it exceeded all bounds. Amazed, embarraſſed, and irreſolute, he found himſelf incapable of pronouncing a ſyllable, and remained in ſilence gazing upon Matilda. This gave her opportunity to continue her explanation as follows:

"Think not, Ambroſio, that I come to rob your bride of your affections. No, believe me: Religion alone deſerves you; and far is it from Matilda's wiſh to draw you from the paths of virtue. What I feel for you is love, not

not licentiouſneſs. I ſigh to be poſſeſſor of your heart, not luſt for the enjoyment of your perſon. Deign to liſten to my vindication: a few moments will convince you that this holy retreat is not polluted by my preſence, and that you may grant me your compaſſion without treſpaſſing againſt your vows."—She ſeated herſelf. Ambroſio, ſcarcely conſcious of what he did, followed her example, and ſhe proceeded in her diſcourſe:—

"I ſpring from a diſtinguiſhed family; my father was chief of the noble houſe of Villanegas: he died while I was ſtill an infant, and left me ſole heireſs of his immenſe poſſeſſions. Young and wealthy, I was ſought in marriage by the nobleſt youths of Madrid; but no one ſucceeded in gaining my affections. I had been brought up under the care of an uncle poſſeſſed of the moſt ſolid judgment and extenſive erudition: He took pleaſure in communicating to me ſome portion of his knowledge. Under his inſtructions my underſtanding acquired more ſtrength and juſtneſs than generally falls to the lot of my ſex: the ability of my preceptor being aided by natural curioſity, I not only made a conſiderable progreſs in ſciences univerſally ſtudied, but in others revealed but to few, and lying under cenſure from the blindneſs of ſuperſtition. But while my guardian laboured to enlarge the ſphere of my knowledge, he carefully inculcated every moral precept: he relieved me from the ſhackles of vulgar prejudice: he pointed out the beauty of religion: he taught me to look with adoration upon the pure and virtuous; and, wo is me! I have obeyed him but too well.

"With

"With ſuch diſpoſitions, judge whether I could obſerve with any other ſentiment than diſguſt, the vice, diſſipation, and ignorance which diſgrace our Spaniſh youth. I rejected every offer with diſdain: my heart remained without a maſter, till chance conducted me to the cathedral of the Capuchins. Oh! ſurely on that day my guardian angel ſlumbered, neglectful of his charge! Then was it that I firſt beheld you: you ſupplied the ſuperior's place, abſent from illneſs.—You cannot but remember the lively enthuſiaſm which your diſcourſe created. Oh! how I drank your words! how your eloquence ſeemed to ſteal me from myſelf! I ſcarcely dared to breathe, fearing to loſe a ſyllable; and while you ſpoke, methought a radiant glory beamed round your head, and your countenance ſhone with the majeſty of a god. I retired from the church glowing with admiration. From that moment you became the idol of my heart; the never-changing object of my meditations. I enquired reſpecting you. The reports which were made me of your mode of life, of your knowledge, piety, and ſelf-denial, rivetted the chains impoſed on me by your eloquence. I was conſcious that there was no longer a void in my heart; that I had found the man whom I had ſought till then in vain. In expectation of hearing you again, every day I viſited your cathedral: you remained ſecluded within the abbey walls, and I always withdrew, wretched and diſappointed. The night was more propitious to me, for then you ſtood before me in my dreams; you vowed to me eternal friendſhip; you led me through the paths of virtue, and aſſiſted me to ſupport the vexations of life.

The

The morning diſpelled theſe pleaſing viſions: I awoke, and found myſelf ſeparated from you by barriers which appeared inſurmountable. Time ſeemed only to increaſe the ſtrength of my paſſion: I grew melancholy and deſpondent; I fled from ſociety, and my health declined daily. At length, no longer able to exiſt in this ſtate of torture, I reſolved to aſſume the diſguiſe in which you ſee me. My artifice was fortunate; I was received into the monaſtery, and ſucceeded in gaining your eſteem.

"Now, then, I ſhould have felt completely happy, had not my quiet been diſturbed by the fear of detection. The pleaſure which I received from your ſociety was embittered by the idea, that perhaps I ſhould ſoon be deprived of it: and my heart throbbed ſo rapturouſly at obtaining the marks of your friendſhip, as to convince me that I never ſhould ſurvive its loſs. I reſolved, therefore, not to leave the diſcovery of my ſex to chance——to confeſs the whole to you, and throw myſelf entirely on your mercy and indulgence. Ah! Ambroſio, can I have been deceived? Can you be leſs generous than I thought you? I will not ſuſpect it. You will not drive a wretch to deſpair; I ſhall ſtill be permitted to ſee you, to converſe with you, to adore you! Your virtues ſhall be my example through life: and, when we expire, our bodies ſhall reſt in the ſame grave."

She ceaſed.—While ſhe ſpoke, a thouſand oppoſing ſentiments combated in Ambroſio's boſom. Surpriſe at the ſingularity of this adventure; confuſion at her abrupt declaration; reſentment at her boldneſs in entering the monaſtery;

naſtery; and conſciouſneſs of the auſterity with which it behoved him to reply; ſuch were the ſentiments of which he was aware: but there were others alſo which did not obtain his notice. He perceived not that his vanity was flattered by the praiſes beſtowed on his eloquence and virtue; that he felt a ſecret pleaſure in reflecting that a young and ſeemingly lovely woman had for his ſake abandoned the world, and ſacrificed every other paſſion to that which ſhe had inſpired: ſtill leſs did he perceive, that his heart throbbed with deſire, while his hand was preſſed gently by Matilda's ivory fingers.

By degrees he recovered from his confuſion: his ideas became leſs bewildered: he was immediately ſenſible of the extreme impropriety, ſhould Matilda be permitted to remain in the abbey after this avowal of her ſex. He aſſumed an air of ſeverity, and drew away his hand.

"How, lady!" ſaid he, "can you really hope for my permiſſion to remain amongſt us? Even were I to grant you your requeſt, what good could you derive from it? Think you, that I ever can reply to an affection, which—"

"No, father, no! I expect not to inſpire you with a love like mine: I only wiſh for the liberty to be near you; to paſs ſome hours of the day in your ſociety; to obtain your compaſſion, your friendſhip and eſteem. Surely my requeſt is not unreaſonable."

But reflect, lady! reflect only for a moment on the impropriety of my harbouring a woman in the abbey, and that too a woman who confeſſes that ſhe loves me. It muſt not be. The riſk of your being diſcovered is too great;

great; and I will not expoſe myſelf to ſo dangerous a temptation."

"Temptation, ſay you? Forget that I am a woman, and it no longer exiſts: conſider me only as a friend; as an unfortunate, whoſe happineſs, whoſe life, depends upon your protection. Fear not, leſt I ſhould ever call to your remembrance, that love the moſt impetuous, the moſt unbounded, has induced me to diſguiſe my ſex; or that, inſtigated by deſires, offenſive to *your* vows and my own honour, I ſhould endeavour to ſeduce you from the path of rectitude. No Ambroſio! learn to know me better: I love you for your virtues: loſe them, and with them you loſe my affections. I look upon you as a ſaint: prove to me that you are no more than man, and I quit you with diſguſt. Is it then from me that you fear temptation? from me, in whom the world's dazzling pleaſures created no other ſentiment than contempt? from me, whoſe attachment is grounded on your exemption from human frailty? Oh! diſmiſs ſuch injurious apprehenſions! think nobler of me; think nobler of yourſelf. I am incapable of ſeducing you to error; and ſurely your virtue is eſtabliſhed on a baſis too firm to be ſhaken by unwarranted deſires. Ambroſio! deareſt Ambroſio! drive me not from your preſence; remember your promiſe, and authoriſe my ſtay."

"Impoſſible, Matilda! *your* intereſt commands me to refuſe your prayer, ſince I tremble for you, not for myſelf. After vanquiſhing the impetuous ebullitions of youth; after paſſing thirty years in mortification and penance, I might ſafely permit your ſtay, nor fear your inſpiring me with warmer ſentiments than pity!

ty: but to yourself, remaining in the abbey can produce none but fatal consequences. 'You will misconstrue my every word and action; you will seize every circumstance with avidity which encourages you to hope the return of your affection; insensibly, your passions will gain a superiority over your reason; and, far from being repressed by my presence, every moment which we pass together will only serve to irritate and excite them. Believe me, unhappy woman! you possess my sincere compassion. I am convinced that you have hitherto acted upon the purest motives; but though you are blind to the imprudence of your conduct, in me it would be culpable not to open your eyes. I feel that duty obliges my treating you with harshness; I must reject your prayer, and remove every shadow of hope which may aid to nourish sentiments so pernicious to your repose. Matilda, you must from hence to-morrow.'

"To-morrow, Ambrosio? to-morrow? Oh! surely you cannot mean it! you cannot resolve on driving me to despair! you cannot have the cruelty——"

"You have heard my decision, and it must be obeyed: the laws of our order forbid your stay: it would be perjury to conceal that a woman is within these walls, and my vows will oblige me to declare your story to the community. You must from hence. I pity you, but can do no more."

He pronounced these words in a faint and trembling voice; then, rising from his seat, he would have hastened towards the monastery. Uttering a loud shriek, Matilda followed, and detained him.

"Stay yet one moment, Ambroſio! hear me yet ſpeak one word!"

"I dare not liſten. Releaſe me: you know my reſolution."

"But one word! but one laſt word, and I have done!"

"Leave me. Your entreaties are in vain: you muſt from hence to-morrow."

"Go then, barbarian! but this reſource is ſtill left me."

As ſhe ſaid this, ſhe ſuddenly drew a poniard. She rent open her garment, and placed the weapon's point againſt her boſom.

"Father, I will never quit theſe walls alive."

"Hold! hold, Matilda! what would you do?"

"You are determined, ſo am I; the moment that you leave me, I plunge this ſteel in my heart."

"Holy St. Francis! Matilda, have you your ſenſes? Do you know the conſequences of your action? that ſuicide is the greateſt of crimes? that you deſtroy your ſoul? that you loſe your claim to ſalvation? that you prepare for yourſelf everlaſting torments?"

"I care not, I care not," ſhe replied paſſionately: either your hand guides me to paradiſe, or my own dooms me to perdition. Speak to me, Ambroſio! Tell me that you will conceal my ſtory; that I ſhall remain your friend and your companion, or this poinard drinks my blood."

As ſhe uttered theſe laſt words, ſhe lifted her arm, and made a motion as if to ſtab herſelf. The friar's eyes followed with dread the courſe of the dagger. She had torn open her habit,

habit, and her bosom was half exposed. The weapon's point rested upon her left breast: and, oh! that was such a breast! The moon-beams darting full upon it enabled the monk to observe its dazzling whiteness: his eye dwelt with insatiable avidity upon the beauteous orb: a sensation till then unknown filled his heart with a mixture of anxiety and delight; a raging fire shot through every limb; the blood boiled in his veins, and a thousand wild wishes bewildered his imagination.

"Hold!" cried he, in a hurried faltering voice; "I can resist no longer! Stay then, enchantress! stay for my destruction!"

He said; and, rushing from the place, hastened towards the monastery: he regained his cell, and threw himself upon his couch, distracted, irresolute, and confused.

He found it impossible for some time to arrange his ideas. The scene in which he had been engaged, had excited such a variety of sentiments in his bosom, that he was incapable of deciding which was predominant. He was irresolute what conduct he ought to hold with the disturber of his repose; he was conscious that prudence, religion, and propriety, necessitated his obliging her to quit the abbey: but, on the other hand, such powerful reasons authorised her stay, that he was but too much inclined to consent to her remaining. He could not avoid being flattered by Matilda's declaration, and at reflecting that he had unconsciously vanquished an heart which had resisted the attacks of Spain's noblest cavaliers. The manner in which he had gained her affections was also the most satisfactory to his vanity: he remembered the many happy hours which he had passed in Rosario's society; and dreaded that void

in his heart which parting with him would occaſion. Beſides all this, he conſidered, that as Matilda was wealthy, her favour might be of eſſential benefit to the abbey.

"And what do I riſk," ſaid he to himſelf, "by authorizing her ſtay? May I not ſafely credit her aſſertions? Will it not be eaſy for me to forget her ſex, and ſtill conſider her as my friend and my diſciple? Surely her love is as pure as ſhe deſcribes: had it been the offſpring of mere licentiouſneſs, would ſhe ſo long have concealed it in her own boſom? Would ſhe not have employed ſome means to procure its gratification? She has done quite the contrary: ſhe ſtrove to keep me in ignorance of her ſex; and nothing but the fear of detection, and my inſtances, would have compelled her to reveal the ſecret: ſhe has obſerved the duties of religion not leſs ſtrictly than myſelf. ſhe has made no attempt to rouſe my ſlumbering paſſions, nor has ſhe ever converſed with me till this night on the ſubject of love. Had ſhe been deſirous to gain my affections, not my eſteem, ſhe would not have concealed from me her charms ſo carefully: at this very moment I have never ſeen her face; yet certainly that face muſt be lovely, and her perſon beautiful, to judge by her—by what I have ſeen.

As this laſt idea paſſed through his imagination, a bluſh ſpread itſelf over his cheek. Alarmed at the ſentiments which he was indulging, he betook himſelf to prayer: he ſtarted from his couch, knelt before the beautiful Madona, and entreated her aſſiſtance in ſtifling ſuch culpable emotions: he then returned to his bed, and reſigned himſelf to ſlumber.

He

He awoke heated and unrefreſhed. During his ſleep his enflamed imagination had preſented him with none but the moſt voluptuous objects. Matilda ſtood before him in his dreams, and his eyes again dwelt upon her naked breaſt; ſhe repeated her proteſtations of eternal love, threw her arms round his neck, and loaded him with kiſſes: he returned them; he claſped her paſſionately to his boſom, and —the viſion was diſſolved. Sometimes his dreams preſented the image of his favourite Madona, and he fancied that he was kneeling before her: as he offered up his vows to her, the eyes of the figure ſeemed to beam on him with inexpreſſible ſweetneſs; he preſſed his lips to hers and found them warm: the animated form ſtarted from the canvas, embraced him affectionately, and his ſenſes were unable to ſupport delight ſo exquiſite. Such were the ſcenes on which his thoughts were employed while ſleeping: his unſatisfied deſires placed before him the moſt luſtful and provoking images, and he rioted in joys till then unknown to him.

He ſtarted from his couch, filled with confuſion at the remembrance of his dreams: ſcarcely was he leſs aſhamed when he reflected on his reaſons of the former night, which induced him to authoriſe Matilda's ſtay. The cloud was now diſſipated which had obſcured his judgment; he ſhuddered when he beheld his arguments blazoned in their proper colours, and found that he had been a ſlave to flattery, to avarice, and ſelf love. If in one hour's converſation Matilda had produced a change ſo remarkable in his ſentiments, what had he not to dread from her remaining in the abbey?

Become ſenſible of his danger, awakened from his dream of confidence, he reſolved to inſiſt on her departing without delay: he began to feel that he was not proof againſt temptation; and that, however Matilda might reſtrain herſelf within the bounds of modeſty, he was unable to contend with thoſe paſſions from which he falſely thought himſelf exempted.

"Agnes! Agnes!" he exclaimed, while reflecting on his embarraſſments, "I already feel thy curſe!"

He quitted his cell, determined upon diſmiſſing the feigned Roſario. He appeared at matins; but his thoughts were abſent, and he paid them but little attention: his heart and brain were both of them filled with worldly objects, and he prayed without devotion. The ſervice over, he deſcended into the garden; he bent his ſteps towards the ſame ſpot where on the preceding night he had made this embarraſſing diſcovery: he doubted not that Matilda would ſeek him there. He was not deceived: ſhe ſoon entered the hermitage, and approached the monk with a timid air. After a few minutes, during which both were ſilent, ſhe appeared as if on the point of ſpeaking; but the abbot, who during this time had been ſummoning up all his reſolution, haſtily interrupted her. Though ſtill unconſcious how extenſive was its influence, he dreaded the melodious ſeduction of her voice.

"Seat yourſelf by my ſide, Matilda," ſaid he, aſſuming a look of firmneſs, though carefully avoiding the leaſt mixture of ſeverity; "liſten to me patiently, and believe that, in what I ſhall ſay, I am not more influenced by my own intereſt than by yours; believe that I feel

feel for you the warmeſt friendſhip, the trueſt compaſſion; and that you cannot feel more grieved than I do, when I declare to you that we muſt never meet again."

"Ambroſio!" ſhe cried, in a voice at once expreſſive both of ſurpriſe and of ſorrow.

"Be calm, my friend! my Roſario! ſtill let me call you by that name ſo dear to me: our ſeparation is unavoidable; I bluſh to own how ſenſibly it affects me.—But yet it muſt be ſo; I feel myſelf incapable of treating you with indifference; and that very conviction obliges me to inſiſt upon your departure. Matilda, you muſt ſtay here no longer."

"Oh! where ſhall I now ſeek for probity? Diſguſted with a perfidious world, in what happy region does Truth conceal herſelf? Father, I hoped that ſhe reſided here; I thought that your boſom had been her favourite ſhrine. And you too prove falſe? Oh God! and you too can betray me?"

"Matilda?"

"Yes, father, yes; 'tis with juſtice that I reproach you. Oh! where are your promiſes? My noviciate is not expired, and yet will you compel me to quit the monaſtery? Can you have the heart to drive me from you? and have I not received your ſolemn oath to the contrary?"

"I will not compel you to quit the monaſtery; you have received my ſolemn oath to the contrary: but yet, when I throw myſelf upon your generoſity; when I declare to you the embarraſſments in which your preſence involves me, will you not releaſe me from that oath? Reflect upon the danger of a diſcovery; upon

the opprobrium in which ſuch an event would plunge me: reflect, that my honour and reputation are at ſtake; and that my peace of mind depends on your compliance. As yet, my heart is free; I ſhall ſeparate from you with regret, but not with deſpair. Stay here, and a few weeks will ſacrifice my happineſs on the altar of your charms; you are but too intereſting, too amiable! I ſhould love you, I ſhould doat on you! my boſom would become the prey of deſires, which honour and my profeſſion forbid me to gratify. If I reſiſted them, the impetuoſity of my wiſhes unſatisfied would drive me to madneſs: if I yielded to the temptation, I ſhould ſacrifice to one moment of guilty pleaſure, my reputation in this world, my ſalvation in the next. To you, then, I fly for defence againſt myſelf. Preſerve me from loſing the reward of thirty years of ſufferings! preſerve me from becoming the victim of remorſe! *Your* heart has already felt the anguiſh of hopeleſs love: oh! then, if you really value me, ſpare mine that anguiſh! give me back my promiſe; fly from theſe walls. Go, and you bear with you my warmeſt prayers for your happineſs, my friendſhip, my eſteem, and admiration: ſtay, and you become to me the ſource of danger, of ſufferings, of deſpair. Anſwer me, Matilda, what is your reſolve?" She was ſilent.—"Will you not ſpeak, Matilda? Will you not name your choice?"

"Cruel! cruel!" ſhe exclaimed, wringing her hands in agony; "you know too well that you offer me no choice: you know too well that I can have no will but yours!"

"I was not then deceived. Matilda's generoſity equals my expectations."

"Yes

"Yes; I will prove the truth of my affection by ſubmitting to a decree which cuts me to the very heart. Take back your promiſe. I will quit the monaſtery this very day. I have a relation, abbeſs of a convent in Eſtramadura: to her will I bend my ſteps, and ſhut myſelf from the world for ever. Yet tell me, father, ſhall I bear your good wiſhes with me to my ſolitude? Will you ſometimes abſtract your attention from heavenly objects to beſtow a thought upon me?"

"Ah! Matilda, I fear that I ſhall think on you but too often for my repoſe!"

"Then I have nothing more to wiſh for, ſave that we may meet in heaven. Farewell, my friend! my Ambroſio! And yet, methinks, I would fain bear with me ſome token of your regard."

"What ſhall I give you?"

"Something—any thing—one of thoſe flowers will be ſufficient." [Here ſhe pointed to a buſh of roſes, planted at the door of the grotto.] "I will hide it in my boſom, and, when I am dead, the nuns ſhall find it withered upon my heart."

The friar was unable to reply: with ſlow ſteps, and a ſoul heavy with affliction, he quitted the hermitage. He approached the buſh, and ſtooped to pluck one of the roſes. Suddenly he uttered a piercing cry, ſtarted back haſtily, and let the flower, which he already held, fall from his hand. Matilda heard the ſhriek, and flew anxiouſly towards him.

"What is the matter?" ſhe cried. "Anſwer me, for God's ſake! What has happened?"

"I have received my death," he replied in a faint voice: "concealed among the roſes—a ſerpent—"

"Here the pain of his wound became ſo exquiſite, that nature was unable to bear it: his ſenſes abandoned him, and he ſunk inanimate into Matilda's arms.

Her diſtreſs was beyond the power of deſcription. She rent her hair, beat her boſom, and, not daring to quit Ambroſio, endeavoured by loud cries to ſummon the monks to her aſſiſtance. She at length ſucceeded. Alarmed by her ſhrieks, ſeveral of the brothers haſtened to the ſpot, and the ſuperior was conveyed back to the abbey. He was immediately put to bed, and the monk, who officiated as ſurgeon to the fraternity, prepared to examine the wound. By this time Ambroſio's hand had ſwelled to an extraordinary ſize: the remedies which had been adminiſtered to him, 'tis true, reſtored him to life, but not to his ſenſes: he raved in all the horrors of delirium, foamed at the mouth, and four of the ſtrongeſt monks were ſcarcely able to hold him in his bed.

Father Pablos (ſuch was the ſurgeon's name) haſtened to examine the wounded hand. The monks ſurrounded the bed, anxiouſly waiting for the deciſion: among thoſe the feigned Roſario appeared not the moſt inſenſible to the friar's calamity: he gazed upon the ſufferer with inexpreſſible anguiſh; and his groans, which every moment eſcaped from his boſom, ſufficiently betrayed the violence of his affliction.

Father Pablos probed the wound. As he drew out his lancet, its point was tinged with a greeniſh

a greeniſh hue. He ſhook his head mournfully, and quitted the bed-ſide.

"'Tis as I feared," ſaid he; "there is no hope."

"No hope!" exclaimed the monks with one voice; "ſay you, no hope?"

"From the ſudden effects, I ſuſpected that the abbot was ſtung by a cientipedoro*: the venom which you ſee upon my lancet confirms my idea. He cannot live three days."

"And can no poſſible remedy be found?" enquired Roſario.

"Without extracting the poiſon, he cannot recover; and how to extract it is to me ſtill a ſecret. All that I can do is to apply ſuch herbs to the wound as will relieve the anguiſh: the patient will be reſtored to his ſenſes; but the venom will corrupt the whole maſs of his blood, and in three days he will exiſt no longer."

Exceſſive was the univerſal grief at hearing this deciſion. Pablos, as he had promiſed, dreſſed the wound, and then retired, followed by his companions. Roſario alone remained in the cell, the abbot, at his urgent entreaty, having been committed to his care. Ambroſio's ſtrength worn out by the violence of his exertions, he had by this time fallen into a profound ſleep. So totally was he overcome by wearineſs, that he ſcarcely gave any ſigns of life. He was ſtill in this ſituation, when the monks returned to enquire whether any change had taken place. Pablos looſened the bandage which concealed the wound, more from a

* The cientipedoro is ſuppoſed to be a native of Cuba, and to have been brought into Spain from that iſland in the veſſel of Columbus.

principle

principle of curioſity, than from indulging the hope of diſcovering any favourable ſymptoms. What was his aſtoniſhment at finding that the inflammation had totally ſubſided! He probed the hand; his lancet came out pure and unſullied; no traces of the venom were perceptible; and had not the orifice ſtill been viſible, Pablos might have doubted that there had ever been a wound.

He communicated this intelligence to his brethren: their delight was only equalled by their ſurpriſe. From the latter ſentiment, however, they were ſoon releaſed, by explaining the circumſtance according to their own ideas. They were perfectly convinced that their ſuperior was a ſaint, and thought that nothing could be more natural than for St. Francis to have operated a miracle in his favour. This opinion was adopted unanimouſly. They declared it ſo loudly, and vociferated "A miracle! a miracle!" with ſuch fervour, that they ſoon interrupted Ambroſio's ſlumbers.

The monks immediately crowded round his bed, and expreſſed their ſatisfactionat his wonderful recovery. He was perfectly in his ſenſes, and free from every complaint except feeling weak and languid. Pablos gave him a ſtrengthening medicine, and adviſed his keeping his bed for the two ſucceeding days: he then retired, having deſired his patient not to exhauſt himſelf by converſation, but rather to endeavour at taking ſome repoſe. The other monks followed his example, and the abbot and Roſario were left without obſervers.

For ſome minutes Ambroſio regarded his attendant with a look of mingled pleaſure and apprehenſion. She was ſeated upon the

ſide

ſide of the bed, her head bending down, and, as uſual, enveloped in the cowl of her habit.

"And you are ſtill here, Matilda?" ſaid the friar at length; "are you not ſatisfied with having ſo nearly effected my deſtruction, that nothing but a miracle could have ſaved me from the grave? Ah! ſurely heaven ſent that ſerpent to puniſh———"

Matilda interrupted him by putting her hand before his lips with an air of gaiety.

"Huſh! father, huſh! you muſt not talk."

"He who impoſed that order, knew not how intereſting are the ſubjects on which I wiſh to ſpeak.

"But I know it, and yet iſſue the ſame poſitive command. I am appointed your nurſe, and you muſt not diſobey my orders."

"You are in ſpirits, Matilda!"

"Well may I be ſo; I have juſt received a pleaſure unexampled through my whole life."

"What was that pleaſure?"

"What I muſt conceal from all, but moſt from you."

"But moſt from me? Nay then, I entreat you, Matilda———"

"Huſh! father, huſh! you muſt not talk. But as you do not ſeem inclined to ſleep, ſhall I endeavour to amuſe you with my harp?"

"How! I knew not that you underſtood muſic."

"Oh! I am a ſorry performer! Yet as ſilence is preſcribed you for eight-and-forty hours, I may poſſibly entertain you, when wearied of your own reflections. I go to fetch my harp."

She ſoon returned with it.

"Now, father, what ſhall I ſing? Will you hear the ballad which treats of the gallant Durandarte,

randarte, who died in the famous battle of Roncevalles ?"

"What you pleaſe, Matilda."

"Oh! call me not Matilda! Call me Roſario, call me your friend. Thoſe are the names which I love to hear from your lips. Now liſten."

She then tuned her harp, and afterwards preluded for ſome moments with ſuch exquiſite taſte as to prove her a perfect miſtreſs of the inſtrument. The air which ſhe played was ſoft and plaintive. Ambroſio, while he liſtened, felt his uneaſineſs ſubſide, and a pleaſing melancholy ſpread itſelf into his boſom. Suddenly Matilda changed the ſtrain: with an hand bold and rapid, ſhe ſtruck a few loud martial chords, and then chanted the following ballad to an air at once ſimple and melodious:

DURANDARTE AND BELERMA.

SAD and fearful is the ſtory
Of the Roncevalles fight;
On thoſe fatal plains of glory
Periſhed many a gallant knight.

There fell Durandarte: never
Verſe a nobler chieftain named:
He, before his lips for ever
Clos'd in ſilence, thus exclaimed:

"Oh! Belerma! Oh! my dear one,
For my pain and pleaſure born,
Seven long years I ſerv'd thee, fair one,
Seven long years my fee was ſcorn.

"And when now thy heart, replying
To my wiſhes, burns like mine,
Cruel fate, my bliſs denying,
Bids me every hope reſign.

"Ah! though young I fall, believe me,
Death would never claim a ſigh;
'Tis to loſe thee, 'tis to leave thee,
Makes me think it hard to die!

"Oh!

"Oh! my couſin Monteſinos,
By that friendſhip firm and dear,
Which from youth has lived between us,
Now my laſt petition hear:

"When my ſoul, theſe limbs forſaking,
Eager ſeeks a purer air,
From my breaſt the cold heart taking,
Give it to Belerma's care.

"Say, I of my lands poſſeſſor
Named her with my dying breath:
Say, my lips I op'd to bleſs her,
Ere they clos'd for aye in death:

"Twice a week, too, how ſincerely
I ador'd her, couſin, ſay:
Twice a week, for one who dearly
Lov'd her, couſin, bid her pray.

"Monteſinos, now the hour
Mark'd by fate is near at hand:
Lo! my arm has loſt its power!
Lo! I drop my truſty brand.

"Eyes, which forth beheld me going,
Homewards ne'er ſhall ſee me hie:
Couſin, ſtop thoſe tears o'erflowing,
Let me on thy boſom die.

"Thy kind hand my eye-lids cloſing,
Yet one favour I implore:
Pray thou for my ſoul's repoſing,
When my heart ſhall throb no more.

"So ſhall Jeſus, ſtill attending,
Gracious to a Chriſtian's vow,
Pleas'd accept my ghoſt aſcending,
And a ſeat in heaven allow."

Thus ſpoke gallant Durandarte;
Soon his brave heart broke in twain.
Greatly joy'd the Mooriſh party,
That the gallant knight was ſlain.

Bitter weeping, Monteſinos
Took from him his helm and glaive:
Bitter weeping Monteſinos
Dug his gallant couſin's grave.

To perform his promiſe made, he
Cut the heart from out the breaſt,
That Belerma, wretched lady!
Might receive the laſt bequeſt.

Sad was Mont ſinos' heart, he
Felt diſtreſs his boſom rend.
" Oh! my couſin Durandarte,
Woe is me to view thy end!

" Sweet in manners, fair in favour,
Mild in temper, fierce in fight,
Warrior nobler, gentler, braver,
Never ſhall behold the light.

" Couſin, lo! my tears bedew thee;
How ſhall I thy loſs ſurvive?
Durandarte, he who ſlew thee,
Wherefore left he me alive!"

While ſhe ſung, Ambroſio liſtened with delight: never had he heard a voice more harmonious; and he wondered how ſuch heavenly ſounds could be produced by any but angels. But though he indulged the ſenſe of hearing, a ſingle look convinced him, that he muſt not truſt to that of ſight. The ſongſtreſs ſat at a little diſtance from his bed. The attitude in which ſhe bent over her harp was eaſy and graceful: her cowl had fallen backwarder than uſual: two coral lips were viſible, ripe, freſh, and melting, and a chin, in whoſe dimples ſeemed to lurk a thouſand Cupids. Her habit's long ſleeve would have ſwept along the chords of the inſtrument: to prevent this inconvenience ſhe had drawn it above her elbow; and by this means an arm was diſcovered, formed in the moſt perfect ſymmetry, the delicacy of whoſe ſkin might have contended with ſnow in whiteneſs. Ambroſio dared to look on her but once: that glance ſufficed to convince him, how dangerous was the preſence of this ſeducing object. He cloſed his eyes, but ſtrove in vain to baniſh her from his thoughts. There ſhe ſtill moved before him, adorned with all thoſe charms which his heated imagination could

could ſupply. Every beauty which he had ſeen appeared embelliſhed; and thoſe ſtill concealed fancy repreſented to him in glowing colours. Still, however, his vows, and the neceſſity of keeping to them, were preſent to his memory. He ſtruggled with deſire, and ſhuddered when he beheld how deep was the precipice before him.

Matilda ceaſed to ſing. Dreading the influence of her charms, Ambroſio remained with his eyes cloſed, and offered up his prayers to St. Francis to aſſiſt him in this dangerous trial! Matilda believed that he was ſleeping: ſhe roſe from her ſeat, approached the bed ſoftly, and for ſome minutes gazed upon him attentively.

"He ſleeps!" ſaid ſhe at length in a low voice, but whoſe accents the abbot diſtinguiſhed perfectly: "now then I may gaze upon him without offence; I may mix my breath with his; I may doat upon his features, and he cannot ſuſpect me of impurity and deceit. He fears my ſeducing him to the violation of his vows. Oh! the unjuſt! were it my wiſh to excite deſire, ſhould I conceal my features from him ſo carefully?—thoſe features, of which I daily hear him——"

She ſtopped, and was loſt in her reflections.

"It was but yeſterday," ſhe continued; "but a few ſhort hours have paſſed ſince I was dear to him; he eſteemed me, and my heart was ſatisfied: now, oh! now, how cruelly is my ſituation changed! He looks on me with ſuſpicion; he bids me leave him, leave him for ever. Oh! you, my ſaint, my idol! You! holding the next place to God in my breaſt, yet two days, and my heart will be unveiled to you. Could you know

know my feelings, when I beheld your agony! Could you know how much your ſufferings have endeared you to me! But the time will come, when you will be convinced that my paſſion is pure and diſintereſted. Then you will pity me, and feel the whole weight of theſe ſorrows."

As ſhe ſaid this, her voice was choaked by weeping. While ſhe bent over Ambroſio, a tear fell upon his cheek.

"Ah! I have diſturbed him," cried Matilda, and retreated haſtily.

Her alarm was ungrounded. None ſleep ſo profoundly as thoſe who are determined not to wake. The friar was in this predicament: he ſtill ſeemed buried in a repoſe, which every ſucceeding minute rendered him leſs capable of enjoying. The burning tear had communicated its warmth to his heart.

"What affection! what purity!" ſaid he internally. Ah! ſince my boſom is thus ſenſible of pity, what would it be if agitated by love?"

Matilda again quitted her ſeat, and retired to ſome diſtance from the bed. Ambroſio ventured to open his eyes, and to caſt them upon her fearfully. Her face was turned from him. She reſted her head in a melancholy poſture upon her harp and gazed on the picture which hung oppoſite to the bed.

"Happy, happy image!" Thus did ſhe addreſs the beautiful Madona; "'tis to you that he offers his prayers; 'tis on you that he gazes with admiration. I thought you would have lightened my ſorrows; you have only ſerved to increaſe their weight; you have made me feel, that, had I known him ere his vows were pronounced,

nounced, Ambroſio and happineſs might have been mine. With what pleaſure he views this picture! With what fervour he addreſſes his prayers to the inſenſible image! Ah! may not his ſentiments be inſpired by ſome kind and ſecret genius, friend to my affection? May it not be man's natural inſtinct which informs him ——? Be ſilent! idle hopes! let me not encourage an idea, which takes from the brilliance of Ambroſio's virtue. 'Tis religion, not beauty, which attracts his admiration; 'tis not to the woman, but the divinity that he kneels. Would he but addreſs to me the leaſt tender expreſſion which he pours forth to this Madona! Would he but ſay, that were he not already affianced to the church, he would not have deſpiſed Matilda! Oh! let me nouriſh that fond idea. Perhaps he may yet acknowledge that he feels for me more than pity, and that affection like mine might well have deſerved a return. Perhaps he may own thus much when I lie on my death-bed. He then need not fear to infringe his vows, and the confeſſion of his regard will ſoften the pangs of dying. Would I were ſure of this! Oh! how earneſtly ſhould I ſigh for the moment of diſſolution!"

Of this diſcourſe the abbot loſt not a ſyllable; and the tone in which ſhe pronounced theſe laſt words pierced to his heart. Involuntarily he raiſed himſelf from his pillow.

"Matilda!" he ſaid in a troubled voice; "Oh! my Matilda!"

She ſtarted at the ſound, and turned towards him haſtily. The ſuddenneſs of her movement made her cowl fall back from her head; her features became viſible to the monk's enquiring

quiring eye. What was his amazement at beholding the exact reſemblance of his admired Madona! The ſame exquiſite proportion of features, the ſame profuſion of golden hair, the ſame roſy lips, heavenly eyes, and majeſty of countenance adorned Matilda! uttering an exclamation of ſurpriſe, Ambroſio ſunk back upon his pillow, and doubted whether the object before him was mortal or divine.

Matilda ſeemed penetrated with confuſion. She remained motionleſs inher place, and ſupported herſelf upon her inſtrument, her eyes were bent upon the earth, and her fair cheeks overſpread with bluſhes. On recovering herſelf, her firſt action was to conceal her features. She then, in an unſteady and troubled voice, ventured to addreſs thoſe words to the friar:

"Accident has made you maſter of a ſecret, which I never would have revealed but on the bed of death: yes, Ambroſio, in Matilda de Villanegas you ſee the original of your beloved Madona. Soon after I conceived my unfortunate paſſion, I formed the project of conveying to you my picture. Crowds of admirers had perſuaded me that I poſſeſſed ſome beauty, and I was anxious to know what effect it would produce upon you. I cauſed my portrait to be drawn by Martin Galuppi, a celebrated Venetian at that time reſident in Madrid. The reſemblance was ſtriking: I ſent it to the Capuchin abbey as if for ſale; and the Jew from whom you bought it was one of my emiſſaries. You purchaſed it. Judge of my rapture, when informed that you had gazed upon it with delight, or rather with adoration; that you had ſuſpended it in your cell, and that you addreſſed

dreſſed your ſupplications to no other ſaint! Will this diſcovery make me ſtill more regarded as an object of ſuſpicion? Rather ſhould it convince you how pure is my affection, and engage you to ſuffer me in your ſociety and eſteem. I heard you daily extol the praiſes of my portrait. I was an eye witneſs of the tranſports which its beauty excited in you: yet I forbore to uſe againſt your virtue thoſe arms with which yourſelf had furniſhed me. I concealed thoſe features from your ſight, which you loved unconſciouſly. I ſtrove not to excite deſire by diſplaying my charms, or to make myſelf miſtreſs of your heart through the medium of your ſenſes. To attract your notice by ſtudiouſly attending to religious duties, to endear myſelf to you by convincing you that my mind was virtuous and my attachment ſincere, ſuch was my only aim. I ſucceeded; I became your companion and your friend. I concealed my ſex from your knowledge; and had you not preſſed me to reveal my ſecret, had I not been tormented by the fear of a diſcovery, never had you known me from any other than Roſario. And ſtill are you reſolved to drive me from you? The few hours of life which yet remain for me, may I not paſs them in your preſence? Oh! ſpeak, Ambroſio, and tell me that I may ſtay."

This ſpeech gave the abbot an opportunity of recollecting himſelf. He was conſcious that, in the preſent diſpoſition of his mind, avoiding her ſociety was his only refuge from the power of this enchanting woman.

"Your declaration has ſo much aſtoniſhed me," ſaid he, "that I am at preſent incapable of anſwering you. Do not inſiſt upon a reply, Matilda;

Matilda: leave me to myſelf, I have need to be alone."

"I obey you; but, before I go, promiſe not to inſiſt upon my quitting the abbey immediately."

"Matilda, reflect upon your ſituation; reflect upon the conſequences of your ſtay: our ſeparation is indiſpenſable, and we muſt part."

"But not to-day, father! Oh! in pity, not to-day!"

"You preſs me too hard; but I cannot reſiſt that tone of ſupplication. Since you inſiſt upon it, I yield to your prayer; I conſent to your remaining here a ſufficient time to prepare, in ſome meaſure, the brethren for your departure: ſtay yet two days; but on the third"—(He ſighed involuntarily)—"remember, that on the third we muſt part for ever!"

She caught his hand eagerly, and preſſed it to her lips.

"On the third!" ſhe exclaimed with an air of wild ſolemnity: "You are right, father, you are right! On the third we muſt part for ever!"

There was a dreadful expreſſion in her eye as ſhe uttered theſe words, which penetrated the friar's ſoul with horror. Again ſhe kiſſed his hand, and then fled with rapidity from the chamber.

Anxious to authoriſe the preſence of his dangerous gueſt, yet conſcious that her ſtay was infringing the laws of his order, Ambroſio's boſom became the theatre of a thouſand contending paſſions. At length his attachment to the feigned Roſario, aided by the natural warmth of his temperament, ſeemed likely to obtain the victory: the ſucceſs was aſſured, when that

that presumption which formed the groundwork of his character came to Matilda's assistance. The monk reflected, that to vanquish temptation was an infinitely greater merit than to avoid it; he thought that he ought rather to rejoice in the opportunity given him of proving the firmness of his virtue. St. Anthony had withstood all seductions to lust, then why should not he? Besides, St. Anthony was tempted by the devil, who put every art into practice to excite his passions; whereas Ambrosio's danger proceeded from a mere mortal woman, fearful and modest, whose apprehensions of his yielding were not less violent than his own.

"Yes," said he, "the unfortunate shall stay; I have nothing to fear from her presence: even should my own prove too weak to resist the temptation, I am secured from danger by the innocence of Matilda."

Ambrosio was yet to learn, that to an heart unacquainted with her, vice is ever most dangerous when lurking behind the mask of virtue. He found himself so perfectly recovered, that, when father Pablos visited him again at night, he entreated permission to quit his chamber on the day following. His request was granted. Matilda appeared no more that evening, except in company with the monks when they came in a body to enquire after the abbot's health. She seemed fearful of conversing with him in private, and stayed but a few minutes in his room. The friar slept well; but the dreams of the former night were repeated, and his sensations of voluptuousness were yet more keen and exquisite; the same lust exciting visions floated before his eyes; Matilda, in all the pomp of beauty, warm, tender and luxurious, clasped him to her bosom,

and

and laviſhed upon him the moſt ardent careſſes. He returned them as eagerly; and already was on the point of ſatisfying his deſires, when the faithleſs form diſappeared, and left him to all the horrors of ſhame and diſappointment.

The morning dawned. Fatigued, haraſſed, and exhauſted by his provoking dreams, he was not diſpoſed to quit his bed: he excuſed himſelf from appearing at matins: it was the firſt morning in his life that he had ever miſſed them. He roſe late: during the whole of the day he had no opportunity of ſpeaking to Matilda without witneſſes; his cell was thronged by the monks, anxious to expreſs their concern at his illneſs; and he was ſtill occupied in receiving their compliments on his recovery, when the bell ſummoned them to the refectory.

After dinner the monks ſeparated, and diſperſed themſelves in various parts of the garden, where the ſhade of trees or retirement of ſome grotto preſented the moſt agreeable means of enjoying the ſieſta. The abbot bent his ſteps towards the hermitage; a glance of his eye invited Matilda to accompany him: ſhe obeyed, and followed him thither in ſilence: they entered the grotto and ſeated themſelves: both ſeemed unwilling to begin the converſation, and to labour under the influence of mutual embarraſſment. At length the abbot ſpoke: he converſed only on indifferent topics, and Matilda anſwered him in the ſame tone; ſhe ſeemed anxious to make him forget that the perſon who ſat by him was any other than Roſario. Neither of them dared, or indeed wiſhed, to make an alluſion to the ſubject which was moſt at the hearts of both.

Matilda's

Matilda's efforts to appear gay were evidently forced; her ſpirits were oppreſſed by the weight of anxiety; and when ſhe ſpoke her voice was low and feeble; ſhe ſeemed deſirous of finiſhing a converſation which embarraſſed her; and, complaining that ſhe was unwell, ſhe requeſted Ambroſio's permiſſion to return to the abbey. He accompanied her to the door of her cell; and when arrived there, he ſtopped her to declare his conſent to her continuing the partner of his ſolitude, ſo long as ſhould be agreeable to herſelf.

She diſcovered no marks of pleaſure at receiving this intelligence, though on the preceding day ſhe had been ſo anxious to obtain the permiſſion.

"Alas, father," ſhe ſaid, waving her head mournfully, "your kindneſs comes too late: my doom is fixed; we muſt ſeparate for ever; yet believe that I am grateful for your generoſity; for your compaſſion of an unfortunate who is but too little deſerving of it."

She put her handkerchief to her eyes; her cowl was only half drawn over her face. Ambroſio obſerved that ſhe was pale, and her eyes ſunk and heavy.

"Good God!" he cried, "you are very ill, Matilda; I ſhall ſend father Pablos to you inſtantly."

"No, do not; I am ill, 'tis true, but he cannot cure my malady. Farewell, father! Remember me in your prayers to-morrow, while I ſhall remember you in heaven."

She entered her cell, and cloſed the door.

The abbot diſpatched to her the phyſician without loſing a moment, and waited his report impatiently; but father Pablos ſoon re-

turned and declared that his errand had been fruitleſs. Roſario refuſed to admit him, and had poſitively rejected his offers of aſſiſtance. The uneaſineſs which this account gave Ambroſio was not trifling; yet he determined that Matilda ſhould have her own way for that night; but that if her ſituation did not mend by the morning he would inſiſt upon her taking the advice of father Pablos.

He did not find himſelf inclined to ſleep; he opened his caſement and gazed upon the moon-beams as they played upon the ſmall ſtream whoſe waters bathed the walls of the monaſtery. The coolneſs of the night breeze, and tranquillity of the hour inſpired the friar's mind with ſadneſs; he thought upon Matilda's beauty and affection; upon the pleaſures which he might have ſhared with her, had he not been reſtrained by monaſtic fetters. He reflected that unſuſtained by hope, her love for him could not long exiſt; that doubtleſs ſhe would ſucceed in extinguiſhing her paſſion, and ſeek for happineſs in the arms of one more fortunate. He ſhuddered at the void which her abſence would leave in his boſom; he looked with diſguſt on the monotony of a convent, and breathed a ſigh towards that world from which he was for ever ſeparated. Such were the reflections which a loud knocking at his door interrupted. The bell of the church had already ſtruck two. The abbot haſtened to enquire the cauſe of this diſturbance. He opened the door of his cell, and a lay brother entered, whoſe looks declared his hurry and confuſion.

"Haſten, reverend father!" ſaid he, "haſten to young Roſario: he earneſtly requeſts to ſee you; he lies at the point of death."

"Gracious

"Gracious God! where is father Pablos? Why is he not with him? Oh! I fear, I fear——"

"Father Pablos has ſeen him, but his art can do nothing. He ſays that he ſuſpects the youth to be poiſoned."

"Poiſoned? Oh! the unfortunate! It is then as I ſuſpected! But let me not loſe a moment; perhaps it may yet be time to ſave her."

He ſaid, and flew towards the cell of the novice. Several monks were already at the chamber; father Pablos was one of them, and held a medicine in his hand, which he was endeavouring to perſuade Roſario to ſwallow. The others were employed in admiring the patient's divine countenance which they now ſaw for the firſt time. She looked lovelier than ever; ſhe was no longer pale or languid; a bright glow had ſpread itſelf over her cheeks; her eyes ſparkled with a ſerene delight, and her countenance was expreſſive of confidence and reſignation.

"Oh! torment me no more!" was ſhe ſaying to Pablos, when the terrified abbot ruſhed haſtily into the cell; "my diſeaſe is far beyond the reach of your ſkill, and I wiſh not to be cured of it." Then perceiving Ambroſio—— "Ah, 'tis he!" ſhe cried; I ſee him once again before we part for ever! Leave me, my brethren; much have I to tell this holy man in private."

The monks retired immediately, and Matilda and the abbot remained together.

"What have you done, imprudent woman?" exclaimed the latter, as ſoon as they were left alone: "tell me are my ſuſpicions juſt? Am I

indeed to loſe you? Has your own hand been the inſtrument of your deſtruction?"

She ſmiled, and graſped his hand.

"In what have I been imprudent, father? I have ſacrificed a pebble, and ſaved a diamond. My death preſerves a life valuable to the world, and more dear to me than my own.—Yes, father, I am poiſoned; but know that the poiſon once circulated in your veins."

"Matilda!"

"What I tell you I reſolved never to diſcover to you but on the bed of death; that moment is now arrived. You cannot have forgotten the day already, when your life was endangered by the bite of a cientipedoro. The phyſician gave you over, declaring himſelf ignorant how to extract the venom. I knew but of one means, and heſitated not a moment to employ it. I was left alone with you; you ſlept; I looſened the bandage from your hand; I kiſſed the wound, and drew out the poiſon with my lips. The effect has been more ſudden than I expected. I feel death at my heart; yet an hour, and I ſhall be in a better world."

"Almighty God!" exclaimed the abbot, and ſunk almoſt lifeleſs upon the bed.

After a few minutes he again raiſed himſelf up ſuddenly, and gazed upon Matilda with all the wildneſs of deſpair.

"And you have ſacrificed yourſelf for me! You die, and die to preſerve Ambroſio! And is there indeed no remedy, Matilda? And is there indeed no hope? Speak to me, oh! ſpeak to me! Tell me that you have ſtill the means of life!"

"Be comforted, my only friend! Yes, I have ſtill the means of life in my power; but

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it is a means which I dare not employ; it is dangerous; it is dreadful! Life would be purchaſed at too dear a rate,—unleſs it were permitted me to live for you."

"Then live for me, Matilda; for me and gratitude!"—(He caught her hand, and preſſed it rapturouſly to his lips.)—"Remember our late converſations; I now conſent to every thing. Remember in what lively colours you deſcribed the union of ſouls; be it ours to realize thoſe ideas. Let us forget the diſtinctions of ſex, deſpiſe the world's prejudices, and only conſider each other as brother and friend. Live then, Matilda, oh! live for me!"

"Ambroſio, it muſt not be. When I thought thus, I deceived both you and myſelf: either I muſt die at preſent, or expire by the lingering torments of unſatisfied deſire. Oh! ſince we laſt converſed together, a dreadful veil has been rent from before my eyes. I love you no longer with the devotion which is paid to a ſaint; I prize you no more for the virtues of your ſoul; I luſt for the enjoyment of your perſon. The woman reigns in my boſom, and I am become a prey to the wildeſt of paſſions. Away with friendſhip! 'tis a cold unfeeling word: my boſom burns with love, with unutterable love, and love muſt be its return. Tremble, then, Ambroſio, tremble to ſucceed in your prayers. If I live, your truth, your reputation, your reward of a life paſt in ſufferings, all that you value, is irretrievably loſt. I ſhall no longer be able to combat my paſſions, ſhall ſeize every opportunity to excite your deſires, and labour to effect your diſhonour and my own. No, no, Ambroſio, I muſt not live; I am convinced with every

moment that I have but one alternative; I feel with every heart-throb, that I muſt enjoy you or die."

"Amazement! Matilda! Can it be you who ſpeak to me?"

He made a movement as if to quit his ſeat. She uttered a loud ſhriek, and, raiſing herſelf half out of the bed, threw her arms round the friar to detain him.

"Oh! do not leave me! Liſten to my errors with compaſſion: in a few hours I ſhall be no more: yet a little, and I am free from this diſgraceful paſſion."

"Wretched woman, what can I ſay to you? I cannot—I muſt not—But live, Matilda! oh, live!"

"You do not reflect on what you aſk. What? live to plunge myſelf in infamy? to become the agent of hell? to work the deſtruction both of you and of myſelf? Feel this heart, father."

She took his hand. Confuſed, embarraſſed, and faſcinated, he withdrew it not, and felt her heart throb under it.

"Feel this heart, father! It is yet the ſeat of honour, truth, and chaſtity: if it beats to-morrow, it muſt fall a prey to the blackeſt crimes. Oh, let me then die to-day! Let me die while I yet deſerve the tears of the virtuous. Thus will I expire!"—(She reclined her head upon his ſhoulder; her golden hair poured itſelf over his cheſt.)—"Folded in your arms, I ſhall ſink to ſleep; your hand ſhall cloſe my eyes for ever, and your lips receive my dying breath. And will you not ſometimes think of me? Will you not ſometimes ſhed a tear upon my

my tomb? Oh, yes, yes, yes! that kiſs is my aſſurance."

The hour was night. All was ſilence around. The faint beams of a ſolitary lamp darted upon Matilda's figure, and ſhed through the chamber a dim, myſterious light. No prying eye or curious ear was near the lovers: nothing was heard but Matilda's melodious accents. Ambroſio was in the full vigour of manhood; he ſaw before him a young and beautiful woman, the preſerver of his life, the adorer of his perſon; and whom affection for him had reduced to the brink of the grave. He ſat upon her bed; his hand reſted upon her boſom; her head reclined voluptuouſly upon his breaſt. Who then can wonder if he yielded to the temptation? Drunk with deſire, he preſſed his lips to thoſe which ſought them; his kiſſes vied with Matilda's in warmth and paſſion: he claſped her rapturouſly in his arms; he forgot his vows, his ſanctity, and his fame; he remembered nothing but the pleaſure and opportunity.

"Ambroſio! Oh, my Ambroſio!" ſighed Matilda.

"Thine, ever thine," murmured the friar, and ſunk upon her boſom.

CHAP. III.

——These are the villains
Whom all the travellers do fear so much.
——Some of them are gentlemen,
Such as the fury of ungovern'd youth
Thrust from the company of awful men.
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

THE marquis and Lorenzo proceeded to the hotel in silence. The former employed himself in calling every circumstance to his mind, which related might give Lorenzo's the most favourable idea of his connexion with Agnes. The latter, justly alarmed for the honour of his family, felt embarrassed by the presence of the marquis: the adventure which he had just witnessed forbad his treating him as a friend; and Antonia's interests being entrusted to his mediation, he saw the impolicy of treating him as a foe. He concluded from these reflections, that profound silence would be the wisest plan, and waited with impatience for Don Raymond's explanation.

They arrived at the hotel de las Cisternas. The marquis immediately conducted him to this apartment, and began to express his satisfaction at finding him at Madrid. Lorenzo interrupted him.

"Excuse me, my lord," said he with a distant air; "if I reply somewhat coldly to your expressions of regard. A sister's honour is involved in this affair: till that is established, and the purport of your correspondence with Agnes

Agnes cleared up, I cannot conſider you as my friend. I am anxious to hear the meaningof your conduct; and hope that you will not delay the promiſed explanation."

"Firſt give me your word, that you will liſten with patience and indulgence."

"I love my ſiſter too well to judge her harſhly; and, till this moment, I poſſeſſed no friend ſo dear to me as yourſelf. I will alſo confeſs, that your having it in your power to oblige me in a buſineſs which I have much at heart, makes me very anxious to find you ſtill deſerving my eſteem."

"Lorenzo, you tranſport me! No greater pleaſure can be given me, than an opportunity of ſerving the brother of Agnes."

"Convince me that I can accept your favours without diſhonour, and there is no man in the world to whom I am more willing to be obliged."

"Probably you have already heard your ſiſter mention the name of Alphonſo d'Alvarada?"

"Never. Though I feel for Agnes an affection truly fraternal, circumſtances have prevented us from being much together. While yet a child, ſhe was conſigned to the care of her aunt, who had married a German nobleman. At his caſtle ſhe remained till two years ſince, when ſhe returned to Spain, determined upon ſecluding herſelf from the world."

"Good God! Lorenzo, you knew of her intention, and yet ſtrove not to make her change it?"

"Marquis, you wrong me: the intelligence which I received at Naples ſhocked me extremely, and I haſtened my return to Madrid for the

expreſs purpoſe of preventing the ſacrifice. The moment that I arrived, I flew to the convent of St. Clare, in which Agnes had choſen to perform her noviciate. I requeſted to ſee my ſiſter. Conceive my ſurpriſe, when ſhe ſent me a refuſal: ſhe declared poſitively that, apprehending my influence over her mind, ſhe would not truſt herſelf in my ſociety, till the day before that on which ſhe was to receive the veil. I ſupplicated the nuns; I inſiſted upon ſeeing Agnes; and heſitated not to avow my ſuſpicions, that her being kept from me was againſt her own inclinations. To free herſelf from the imputation of violence, the prioreſs brought me a few lines, written in my ſiſter's well-known hand, repeating the meſſage already delivered. All future attempts to obtain a moment's converſation with her were as fruitleſs as the firſt. She was inflexible, and I was not permitted to ſee her till the day preceding that on which ſhe entered the cloiſter, never to quit it more. This interview took place in the preſence of our principal relations. It was for the firſt time ſince her childhood that I ſaw her, and the ſcene was moſt affecting: ſhe threw herſelf upon my boſom, kiſſed me, and wept bitterly. By every poſſible argument, by tears, by prayers, by kneeling, I ſtrove to make her abandon her intention. I repreſented to her all the hardſhips of a religious life; I painted to her imagination all the pleaſures which ſhe was going to quit; and beſought her to diſcloſe to me what occaſioned her diſguſt to the world. At this laſt queſtion ſhe turned pale, and her tears flowed yet faſter. She entreated me not to preſs her on that ſubject; that it ſufficed me to know that her reſolution

ſolution was taken, and that a convent was the only place where ſhe could now hope for tranquillity. She perſevered in her deſign, and made her profeſſion. I viſited her frequently at the grate; and every moment that I paſſed with her made me feel more affliction at her loſs. I was ſhortly after obliged to quit Madrid; I returned but yeſterday evening, and, ſincethen, have not had time to call at St. Clare's convent."

"Then, till I mentioned it, you never heard the name of Alphonſo d'Alvarada?"

"Pardon me: my aunt wrote me word, that an adventurer ſo called had found means to get introduced into the caſtle of Lindenberg; that he had inſinuated himſelf into my ſiſter's good graces; and that ſhe had even conſented to elope with him. However, before the plan could be executed, the cavalier diſcovered, that the eſtates which he believed Agnes to poſſeſs in Hiſpaniola, in reality belonged to me. This intelligence made him change his intention; he diſappeared on the day that the elopement was to have taken place; and Agnes, in deſpair at his perfidy and meanneſs, had reſolved upon ſecluſion in a convent. She added, that as this adventurer had given himſelf out to be a friend of mine, ſhe wiſhed to know whether I had any knowledge of him. I replied in the negative. I had then very little idea, that Alphonſo d'Alvarada and the marquis de las Ciſternas were one and the ſame perſon: the deſcription given me of the firſt, by no means tallied with what I knew of the latter."

"In this I eaſily recognize Donna Rodopha's perfidious character. Every word of this

this account is ſtamped with marks of her malice, of her falſehood, of her talents for miſrepreſenting thoſe who ſhe wiſhes to injure. Forgive me, Medina, for ſpeaking ſo freely of your relation. The miſchief which ſhe has done me authoriſes my reſentment; and when you have heard my ſtory, you will be convinced that my expreſſions have not been too ſevere."

He then began his narrative in the following manner:—

HISTORY OF DON RAYMOND,

MARQUIS DE LAS CISTERNAS.

LONG experience, my dear Lorenzo, has convinced me how generous is your nature: I waited not for your declaration of ignorance reſpecting your ſiſter's adventures, to ſuppoſe that they had been purpoſely concealed from you. Had they reached your knowledge, from what misfortunes ſhould both Agnes and myſelf have eſcaped! Fate had ordained it otherwiſe. You were on your travels when I firſt became acquainted with your ſiſter; and as our enemies took care to conceal from her your direction, it was impoſſible for her to implore by letter your protection and advice.

On leaving Salamanca, at which univerſity, as I have ſince heard, you remained a year after I quitted it, I immediately ſet out upon my travels. My father ſupplied me liberally with money; but he inſiſted upon my concealing my

my rank, and preſenting myſelf no more than as a private gentleman. This command was iſſued by the counſels of his friend the duke of Villa Hermoſa, a nobleman for whoſe abilities and knowledge of the world I have ever entertained the moſt profound veneration.

"Believe me," ſaid he, "my dear Raymond, you will hereafter feel the benefits of this temporary degradation. 'Tis true, that as the condé de las Ciſternas you would have been received with open arms, and your youthful vanity might have felt gratified by the attentions ſhowered upon you from all ſides. At preſent, much will depend upon yourſelf; you have excellent recommendations, but it muſt be your own buſineſs to make them of uſe to you: you muſt lay yourſelf out to pleaſe; you muſt labour to gain the approbation of thoſe to whom you are preſented: they who would have courted the friendſhip of the condé de las Ciſternas will have no intereſt in finding out the merits, or bearing patiently with the faults, of Alphonſo d'Alvarada: conſequently, when you find yourſelf really liked, you may ſafely aſcribe it to your good qualities, not your rank; and the diſtinction ſhewn you will be infinitely more flattering. Beſides, your exalted birth would not permit your mixing with the lower claſſes of ſociety, which will now be in your power, and from which, in my opinion, you will derive conſiderable benefit. Do not confine yourſelf to the illuſtrious of thoſe countries through which you paſs. Examine the manners and cuſtoms of the multitude: enter into the cottages; and, by obſerving how the vaſſals of foreigners are treated, learn to diminiſh the burthens, and augment

augment the comforts, of your own. According to my ideas of thoſe advantages which a youth deſtined to the poſſeſſion of power and wealth may reap from travel, he ſhould not conſider as the leaſt eſſential, the opportunity of mixing with the claſſes below him, and becoming an eye-witneſs of the ſufferings of the people."

Forgive me, Lorenzo, if I ſeem tedious in my narration: the cloſe connexion which now exiſts between us, makes me anxious that you ſhould know every particular reſpecting me; and in my fear of omitting the leaſt circumſtance which may induce you to think favourably of your ſiſter and myſelf, I may poſſibly relate many which you may think unintereſting.

I followed the duke's advice; I was ſoon convinced of its wiſdom. I quitted Spain, calling myſelf by the aſſumed title of Don Alphonſo d'Alvarada, and attended by a ſingle domeſtic of approved fidelity. Paris was my firſt ſtation. For ſome time I was enchanted with it, as indeed, muſt be every man who is young, rich, and fond of pleaſure. Yet, among all its gaieties, I felt that ſomething was wanting to my heart: I grew ſick of diſſipation: I diſcovered that the people among whom I lived, and whoſe exterior was ſo poliſhed and ſeducing, were at bottom frivolous, unfeeling, and inſincere. I turned from the inhabitants of Paris with diſguſt, and quitted that theatre of luxury without heaving one ſigh of regret.

I now bent my courſe towards Germany, intending to viſit moſt of the principal courts. Prior to this expedition, I meant to make ſome little ſtay at Straſbourg. On quitting my chaiſe

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at Luneville, to take ſome refreſhment, I obſerved a ſplendid equipage, attended by four domeſtics in rich liveries, waiting at the door of the Silver Lion. Soon after, as I looked out of the window, I ſaw a lady of noble preſence, followed by two female attendants, ſtep into the carriage, which drove off immediately.

I enquired of the hoſt who the lady was that had juſt departed.

"A German baroneſs, monſieur, of great rank and fortune; ſhe has been upon a viſit to the ducheſs of Longueville, as her ſervants informed me. She is going to Straſbourg, where ſhe will find her huſband, and then both return to their caſtle in Germany."

I reſumed my journey, intending to reach Straſbourg that night. My hopes, however, were fruſtrated by the breaking down of my chaiſe: the accident happened in the middle of a thick foreſt, and I was not a little embarraſſed as to the means of proceeding. It was the depth of winter; the night was already cloſing round us: and Straſbourg, which was the neareſt town, was ſtill diſtant from us ſeveral leagues. It ſeemed to me that my only alternative to paſſing the night in the foreſt, was to take my ſervant's horſe and ride on to Straſbourg; an undertaking at that ſeaſon very far from agreeable. However, ſeeing no other reſource, I was obliged to make up my mind to it: accordingly, I communicated my deſign to the poſtillion, telling him that I would ſend people to aſſiſt him as ſoon as I reached Straſbourg. I had not much confidence in his honeſty; but Stephano being well armed, and the driver, to all appearance,

pearance, conſiderably advanced in years, I believe I ran no riſk in loſing my baggage.

Luckily, as I then thought, an opportunity preſented itſelf of paſſing the night more agreeably than I expected. On mentioning my deſign of proceeding by myſelf to Straſbourg, the poſtillion ſhook his head in diſapprobation.

"It is a long way," ſaid he; "you will find it a difficult matter to arrive there without a guide: beſides, monſieur ſeems unaccuſtomed to the ſeaſon's ſeverity; and 'tis poſſible that, unable to ſuſtain the exceſſive cold——"

"What uſe is there to preſent me with all theſe objections?" ſaid I, impatiently interrupting him: "I have no other reſource; I run ſtill greater riſk of periſhing with cold by paſſing the night in the foreſt."

"Paſſing the night in the foreſt?" he replied. "Oh, by St. Dennis! we are not in quite ſo bad a plight as that comes to yet. If I am not miſtaken, we are ſcarcely five minutes walk from the cottage of my old friend Baptiſte: he is a wood-cutter, and a very honeſt fellow. I doubt not but he will ſhelter you for the night with pleaſure. In the mean time, I can take the ſaddle-horſe, ride to Straſbourg, and be back with proper people to mend your carriage by break of day."

"And, in the name of God," ſaid I, "how could you leave me ſo long in ſuſpenſe? Why did you not tell me of this cottage ſooner? What exceſſive ſtupidity!"

"I thought, that perhaps monſieur would not deign to accept——"

"Abſurd! Come, come; ſay no more, but conduct us without delay to the woodman's cottage."

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He obeyed, and we moved onwards: the horſes contrived with ſome difficulty, to drag the ſhattered vehicle after us. My ſervant was become almoſt ſpeechleſs, and I began to feel the effects of the cold myſelf before we reached the wiſhed-for cottage. It was a ſmall but neat building: as we drew near it, I rejoiced at obſerving through the window the blaze of a comfortable fire. Our conductor knocked at the door: it was ſome time before any one anſwered; the people within ſeemed in doubt whether we ſhould be admitted.

"Come, come, friend Baptiſte!" cried the driver with impatience, "what are you about? Are you aſleep? Or will you refuſe a night's lodging to a gentleman, whoſe chaiſe has juſt broken down in the foreſt?"

Ah! is it you, honeſt Claude?" replied a man's voice from within: "wait a moment, and the door ſhall be opened."

Soon after the bolts were drawn back; the door was uncloſed, and a man preſented himſelf to us with a lamp in his hand: he gave the guide an hearty reception, and then addreſſed himſelf to me:

"Walk in, monſieur; walk in, and welcome. Excuſe me for not admitting you at firſt; but there are ſo many rogues about this place that, ſaving your preſence, I ſuſpected you to be one."

Thus ſaying, he uſhered me into the room where I had obſerved the fire. I was immediately placed in an eaſy chair, which ſtood cloſe to the hearth. A female, whom I ſuppoſed to be the wife of my hoſt, roſe from her ſeat upon my entrance, and received me with a ſlight and diſtant reverence. She made

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no anſwer to my compliment, but, immediately re-ſeating herſelf, continued the work on which ſhe had been employed. Her huſband's manners were as friendly as hers were harſh and repulſive.

"I wiſh I could lodge you more conveniently, monſieur," ſaid he, "but we cannot boaſt of much ſpare room in this hovel. However, a chamber for yourſelf and another for your ſervant, I think, we can make ſhift to ſupply. You muſt content yourſelf with ſorry fare; but to what we have, believe me, you are heartily welcome."——Then, turning to his wife—"Why, how you ſit there, Marguerite, with as much tranquillity as if you had nothing better to do! Stir about dame! ſtir about! Get ſome ſupper; look out ſome ſheets. Here, here! throw ſome logs upon the fire, for the gentleman ſeems periſhed with cold."

The wife threw her work haſtily upon the table, and proceeded to execute his commands with every mark of unwillingneſs. Her countenance had diſpleaſed me on the firſt moment of my examining it: yet upon the whole, her features were handſome unqueſtionably; but her ſkin was ſallow, and her perſon thin and meagre: a louring gloom overſpread her countenance, and it bore ſuch viſible marks of rancour and ill-will, as could not eſcape being noticed by the moſt inattentive obſerver: her every look and action expreſſed diſcontent and impatience; and the anſwers which ſhe gave Baptiſte, when he reproached her good-humouredly for her diſſatisfied air, were tart, ſhort and cutting. In fine, I conceived at firſt ſight equal diſguſt for her, and prepoſſeſſion in favour

vour of her huſband, whoſe appearance was calculated to inſpire eſteem and confidence. His countenance was open, ſincere, and friendly; his manners had all the peaſant's honeſty, unaccompanied by his rudeneſs: his cheeks were broad, full and ruddy; and in the ſolidity of his perſon he ſeemed to offer an ample apology for the leanneſs of his wife's. From the wrinkles on his brow, I judged him to be turned of ſixty; but he bore his years well, and ſeemed ſtill hearty and ſtrong. The wife could not be more than thirty, but in ſpirits and vivacity ſhe was infinitely older than the huſband.

However, in ſpite of her unwillingneſs, Marguerite began to prepare the ſupper, while the woodman converſed gaily on different ſubjects. The poſtillion who had been furniſhed with a bottle of ſpirits, was now ready to ſet out for Straſbourg, and enquired whether I had any further commands.

"For Straſbourg?" interrupted Baptiſte; "you are not going thither to-night?"

"I beg your pardon: if I do not fetch workmen to mend the chaiſe, how is monſieur to proceed to-morrow?"

"That is true, as you ſay, I had forgotten the chaiſe. Well, but Claude, you may at leaſt eat your ſupper here? That can make you loſe very little time; and monſieur looks too kind-hearted to ſend you out with an empty ſtomach on ſuch a bitter cold night as this is."

To this I readily aſſented, telling the poſtillion that my reaching Straſbourg the next day an hour or two later would be perfectly immaterial. He thanked me, and then leaving the cottage

cottage with Stephano, put up his horſes in the woodman's ſtable. Baptiſte followed them to the door, and looked out with anxiety.

"'Tis a ſharp, biting wind," ſaid he: "I wonder what detains my boys ſo long! Monſieur, I ſhall ſhew you two of the fineſt lads that ever ſtepped in ſhoe of leather: the eldeſt is three-and-twenty, the ſecond a year younger: their equals for ſenſe, courage and activity, are not to be found within fifty miles of Straſbourg. Would they were back again! I begin to feel uneaſy about them.

Marguerite was at this time employed in laying the cloth.

"And are you equally anxious for the return of your ſons?" ſaid I to her.

"Not I," ſhe replied peeviſhly; "they are no children of mine."

"Come, come, Marguerite!" ſaid the huſband, "do not be out of humour with the gentleman for aſking a ſimple queſtion: had you not looked ſo croſs, he would never have thought you old enough to have a ſon of three-and-twenty; but you ſee how many years ill-temper adds to you!—Excuſe my wife's rudeneſs, monſieur; a little thing puts her out; and ſhe is ſomewhat diſpleaſed at your not thinking her to be under thirty.—That is the truth, is it not, Marguerite? You know, monſieur, that age is always a tickliſh ſubject with a woman. Come, come, Marguerite! clear up a little. If you have not ſons as old, you will ſome twenty years hence; and I hope that we ſhall live to ſee them juſt ſuch lads as Jacques and Robert."

Marguerite claſped her hands together paſſionately.

"God

"God forbid!" ſaid ſhe, "God forbid! If I thought it, I would ſtrangle them with my own hands."

She quitted the room haſtily, and went up ſtairs.

I could not help expreſſing to the woodman how much I pitied him for being chained for life to a partner of ſuch ill-humour.

"Ah, Lord! monſieur, every one has his ſhare of grievances, and Marguerite has fallen to mine. Beſides, after all, ſhe is only croſs, and not malicious: the worſt is, that her affection for two children by a former huſband, makes her play the ſtep-mother with my two ſons; ſhe cannot bear the ſight of them; and by her good will, they would never ſet a foot within my door. But on this point I always ſtand firm, and never will conſent to abandon the poor lads to the world's mercy, as ſhe has often ſolicited me to do. In every thing elſe I let her have her own way; and truly ſhe manages a family rarely, that I muſt ſay for her."

We were converſing in this manner, when our diſcourſe was interrupted by a loud halloo, which rang through the foreſt.

"My ſons, I hope!" exclaimed the woodman, and ran to open the door.

The halloo was repeated. We now diſtinguiſhed the trampling of horſes; and ſoon after, a carriage attended by ſeveral cavaliers ſtopped at the cottage door. One of the horſemen enquired how far they were ſtill from Straſbourg. As he addreſſed himſelf to me, I anſwered in the number of miles which Claude had told me; upon which a volley of curſes was vented againſt the drivers for having loſt their way. The perſons in the coach were now informed

informed of the distance of Strasbourg; and also that the horses were so fatigued as to be incapable of proceeding further. A lady, who appeared to be the principal, expressed much chagrin at this intelligence; but as there was no remedy, one of the attendants asked the woodman whether he could furnish them with lodging for the night.

He seemed much embarrassed, and replied in the negative; adding, that a Spanish gentleman and his servant were already in possession of the only spare appartment in his house. On hearing this, the gallantry of my nation would not permit me to retain those accommodations of which a female was in want. I instantly signified to the woodman, that I transferred my right to the lady; he made some objections, but I over-ruled them, and hastening to the carriage, opened the door, and assisted the lady to descend. I immediately recognized her for the same person whom I had seen at the inn at Luneville. I took an opportunity of asking one of her attendants what was her name?

"The baroness Lindenberg," was the answer.

I could not but remark how different a reception our host had given these new-comers and myself. His reluctance to admit them was visibly expressed on his countenance; and he prevailed on himself with difficulty to tell the lady that she was welcome. I conducted her into the house, and placed her in the arm-chair which I had just quitted. She thanked me very graciously, and made a thousand apologies for putting me to an inconveinence. Suddenly the wood-man's countenance cleared up.

"At

"At last I have arranged it!" said he, interrupting her excuses. "I can lodge you and your suite, madam, and you will not be under the necessity of making this gentleman suffer for his politeness. We have two spare chambers, one for the lady, the other, monsieur, for you: my wife shall give up hers to the two waiting-women: as for the men servants, they must content themselves with passing the night in a large barn, which stands at a few yards distance from the house; there they shall have a blazing fire, and as good a supper as we can make shift to give them."

After several expressions of gratitude on the lady's part, and opposition on mine to Marguerite's giving up her bed, this arrangement was agreed to. As the room was small, the baroness immediately dismissed her male domestics. Baptiste was on the point of conducting them to the barn which he had mentioned, when two young men appeared at the door of the cottage.

"Hell and furies!" exclaimed the first, starting back, "Robert, the house is filled with strangers!"

"Ha! there are my sons!" cried our host. "Why, Jacques! Robert! whither are you running, boys? There is room enough still for you."

Upon this assurance the youths returned. The father presented them to the baroness and myself; after which he withdrew with our domestics, while, at the request of the two waiting-women, Marguerite conducted them to the room designed for their mistress.

The two new-comers were tall, stout, well-made young men, hard-featured, and very much sun-

ſunburnt. They paid their compliments to us in few words, and acknowledged Claude, who now entered the room, as an old acquaintance. They then threw aſide their cloaks in which they were wrapped up, took off a leathern belt to which a large cutlaſs was ſuſpended, and each drawing a brace of piſtols from his girdle laid them upon a ſhelf.

"You travel well armed," ſaid I.

"True, monſieur," replied Robert.—"We left Straſbourg late this evening, and 'tis neceſſary to take precautions at paſſing through this foreſt after dark; it does not bear a good repute, I promiſe you."

"How?" ſaid the Baroneſs, "are there robbers hereabout?"

"So it is ſaid, madame: for my own part, I have travelled through the wood at all hours, and never met with one of them."

Here Marguerite returned. Her ſtep-ſons drew her to the other end of the room, and whiſpered her for ſome minutes. By the looks which they caſt towards us at intervals, I conjectured them to be enquiring our buſineſs in the cottage.

In the mean while, the baroneſs expreſſed her apprehenſions that her huſband would be ſuffering much anxiety upon her account. She had intended to ſend on one of her ſervants to inform the baron of her delay; but the account which the young men gave of the foreſt rendered this plan impracticable. Claude relieved her from her embarraſſment: he informed her that he was under the neceſſity of reaching Straſbourg that night; and that would ſhe truſt him with a letter, ſhe might depend upon its being ſafely delivered.

"And

"And how comes it," said I, "that you are under no apprehenſion of meeting theſe robbers?"

"Alas! monſieur, a poor man with a large family muſt not loſe certain profit becauſe 'tis attended with a little danger; and perhaps my lord the baron may give me a trifle for my pains; beſides, I have nothing to loſe except my life, and that will not be worth the robbers taking."

I thought his arguments bad, and adviſed his waiting till the morning; but as the baroneſs did not ſecond me, I was obliged to give up the point. The baroneſs Lindenberg, as I found afterwards, had long been accuſtomed to ſacrifice the intereſt of others to her own, and her wiſh to ſend Claude to Straſbourg blinded her to the danger of the undertaking. Accordingly, it was reſolved that he ſhould ſet out without delay. The baroneſs wrote her letter to her huſband; and I ſent a few lines to my banker, appriſing him that I ſhould not be at Straſbourg till the next day. Claude took our letters, and left the cottage

The lady declared herſelf much fatigued by her journey: beſides having come from ſome diſtance, the drivers had contrived to loſe their way in the foreſt. She now addreſſed herſelf to Marguerite, deſiring to be ſhewn to her chamber, and permitted to take half an hour's repoſe. One of the waiting-women was immediately ſummoned; ſhe appeared with a light, and the baroneſs followed her up ſtairs. The cloth was ſpreading in the chamber where I was, and Marguerite ſoon gave me to underſtand that I was in her way. Her hints were too broad to be eaſily miſtaken;

I therefore desired one of the young men to conduct me to the chamber where I was to sleep, and where I could remain till supper was ready.

"Which chamber is it, mother?" said Robert.

"The one with green hangings," she replied. "I have just been at the trouble of getting it ready, and have put fresh sheets upon the bed: if the gentleman chooses to loll and lounge upon it, he may make it again himself, for me."

"You are out of humour, mother; but that is no novelty. Have the goodness to follow me, monsieur."

He opened the door and advanced towards a narrow stair-case.

"You have got no light," said Marguerite; "is it your own neck or the gentleman's that you have a mind to break?"

She crossed by me, and put a candle into Robert's hand; having received which, he began to ascend the stair-case. Jacques was employed in laying the cloth, and his back was turned towards me. Marguerite seized the moment when we were unobserved: she caught my hand and pressed it strongly.

"Look at the sheets!" said she as she passed me, and immediately resumed her former occupation.

Startled by the abruptness of her action, I remained as if petrified. Robert's voice desiring me to follow him recalled me to myself. I ascended the stair-case. My conductor ushered me into a chamber where an excellent wood fire was blazing upon the hearth. He placed the light upon the table, enquired whether I had

had any further commands, and on my replying in the negative, left me to myſelf. You may be certain that the moment when I found myſelf alone, was that on which I complied with Marguerite's injunction. I took the candle haſtily, approached the bed and turned down the coverture. What was my aſtoniſhment, my horror, at finding the ſheets crimſoned with blood!

At that moment a thouſand confuſed ideas paſſed before my imagination. The robbers who infeſted the wood, Marguerite's exclamation reſpecting her children, the arms and appearance of the two young men, and the various anecdotes which I had heard related reſpecting the ſecret correſpondence which frequently exiſts between banditti and poſtillions; all theſe circumſtances flaſhed upon my mind, and inſpired me with doubt and apprehenſion. I ruminated on the moſt probable means of aſcertaining the truth of my conjectures. Suddenly I was aware of ſome one below pacing haſtily backwards and forwards. Every thing now apaeared to me an object of ſuſpicion. With precaution I drew near the window, which, as the room had been long ſhut up, was left open, in ſpite of the cold. I ventured to look out. The beams of the moon permitted me to diſtinguiſh a man, whom I had no difficulty to recognize for my hoſt. I watched his movements. He walked ſwiftly, then ſtopped and ſeemed to liſten: he ſtamped upon the ground, and beat his ſtomach with his arms, as if to guard himſelf from the inclemency of the ſeaſon: at the leaſt noiſe, if a voice was

heard in the lower part of the houſe, if a bat flitted paſt him, or the wind rattled amidſt the leafleſs boughs, he ſtarted and looked round with anxiety.

"Plague take him!" ſaid he at length with extreme impatience; what can he be about?

He ſpoke in a low voice; but as he was juſt below my window, I had no difficulty to diſtinguiſh his words.

I now heard the ſteps of one approaching. Baptiſte went towards the ſound; he joined a man, whom his low ſtature and the horn ſuſpended from his neck declared to be no other than my faithful Claude, whom I had ſuppoſed to be already on his way to Straſbourg. Expecting their diſcourſe to throw ſome light upon my ſituation, I haſtened to put myſelf in a condition to hear it with ſafety. For this purpoſe I extinguiſhed the candle, which ſtood upon a table near the bed: the flame of the fire was not ſtrong enough to betray me, and I immediately reſumed my place at the window.

The objects of my curioſity had ſtationed themſelves directly under it. I ſuppoſed that during my momentary abſence, the woodman had been blaming Claude for tardineſs, ſince when I returned to the window the latter was endeavouring to excuſe his fault.

"However," added he, "my diligence at preſent ſhall make up for my paſt delay."

"On that condition," anſwered Baptiſte, "I ſhall readily forgive you: but in truth, as you ſhare equally with us in our prizes, your own intereſt will make you uſe all poſſible diligence.

ligence. 'Twould be a ſhame to let ſuch a noble booty eſcape us. You ſay that this Spaniard is rich?"

"His ſervant boaſted at the inn, that the effects in his chaiſe were worth above two thouſand piſtoles."

Oh! how I curſed Stephano's imprudent vanity.

"And I have been told," continued the poſtilion, "that this baroneſs carries about her a caſket of jewels of immenſe value."

"May be ſo, but I had rather ſhe had ſtayed away. The Spaniard was a ſecure prey; the boys and myſelf could eaſily have maſtered him and his ſervant, and then the two thouſand piſtoles would have been ſhared between us four. Now we muſt let in the band for a ſhare or perhaps the whole covey may eſcape us. Should our friends have betaken themſelves to their different poſts before you reach the cavern, all will be loſt. The lady's attendants are too numerous for us to overpower them. Unleſs our aſſociates arrive in time, we muſt needs let theſe travellers ſet out to-morrow without damage or hurt."

"'Tis plaguy unlucky that my comrades who drove the coach ſhould be thoſe unacquainted with our confederacy! But never fear, friend Baptiſte: an hour will bring me to the cavern; it is now but ten o'clock, and by twelve you may expect the arrival of the band. By the bye, take care of your wife: you know how ſtrong is her repugnance to our mode of life, and ſhe may find means to give information to the lady's ſervants of our deſign."

"Oh! I am ſecure of her ſilence; ſhe is too much afraid of me, and fond of her children,

to dare to betray my ſecret. Beſides, Jacques and Robert keep a ſtrict eye over her, and ſhe is not permitted to ſet a foot out of the cottage. The ſervants are ſafely lodged in the barn. I ſhall endeavour to keep all quiet till the arrival of our friends. Were I aſſured of your finding them, the ſtrangers ſhould be diſpatched this inſtant; but as it is poſſible for you to miſs the banditti, I am fearful of being ſummoned by their domeſtics to produce them in the morning."

"And ſuppoſe either of the travellers ſhould diſcover your deſign?"

"Then we muſt poniard thoſe in our power, and take our chance about maſtering the reſt. However, to avoid running ſuch a riſk, haſten to the cavern; the banditti never leave it before eleven, and if you uſe diligence you may reach it in time to ſtop them."

"Tell Robert that I have taken his horſe; my own has broken his bridle, and eſcaped into the wood. What is the watch-word?"

"The reward of courage."

"'Tis ſufficient. I haſten to the cavern."

"And I to rejoin my gueſts, leſt my abſence ſhould create ſuſpicion. Farewell, and be diligent."

Theſe worthy aſſociates now ſeparated; the one bent his courſe towards the ſtable, while the other returned to the houſe.

You may judge what muſt have been my feelings during this converſation, of which I loſt not a ſingle ſyllable. I dared not truſt myſelf to my reflections, nor did any means preſent itſelf to eſcape the dangers which threatened me. Reſiſtance I knew to be vain; I was unarmed, and a ſingle man againſt three. However

ever, I reſolved at leaſt to ſell my life as dearly as I could. Dreading leſt Baptiſte ſhould perceive my abſence, and ſuſpect me to have overheard the meſſage with which Claude was diſpatched, I haſtily re-lighted my candle and quitted the chamber. On deſcending, I found the table ſpread for ſix perſons. The baroneſs ſat by the fire-ſide; Marguerite was employed in dreſſing a ſallad, and her ſtep-ſons were whiſpering together at the further end of the room. Baptiſte, having the round of the garden to make ere he could reach the cottage door, was not yet arrived. I ſeated myſelf quietly oppoſite to the baroneſs.

A glance upon Marguerite told her that her hint had not been thrown away upon me. How different did ſhe now appear to me! What before ſeemed gloom and ſullenneſs, I now found to be diſguſt at her aſſociates and compaſſion for my danger. I looked up to her as to my only reſource; yet knowing her to be watched by her huſband with a ſuſpicious eye, I could place but little reliance on the exertions of her good will.

In ſpite of all my endeavours to conceal it, my agitation was but too viſibly expreſſed upon my countenance. I was pale, and both my words and actions were diſordered and embarraſſed. The young men obſerved this and enquired the cauſe. I attributed it to exceſs of fatigue, and the violent effect produced on me by the ſeverity of the ſeaſon. Whether they believed me or not, I will not pretend to ſay; they at leaſt ceaſed to embarraſs me with their queſtions. I ſtrove to divert my attention from the perils which ſurrounded me, by converſing on different ſubjects with the baroneſs. I talked

of Germany, declaring my intention of visiting it immediately: God knows, that I little thought at that moment of ever seeing it! She replied to me with great ease and politeness, professed that the pleasure of making my acquaintance amply compensated for the delay in her journey, and gave me a pressing invitation to make some stay at the castle of Lindenberg. As she spoke thus the youths exchanged a malicious smile, which declared that she would be fortunate if she ever reached that castle herself. This action did not escape me; but I concealed the emotion which it excited in my breast. I continued to converse with the lady; but my discourse was so frequently incoherent that, as she has since informed me, she began to doubt whether I was in my right senses. The fact was, that while my conversation turned upon one subject, my thoughts were entirely occupied by another. I meditated upon the means of quitting the cottage, finding my way to the barn, and giving the domestics information of our host's designs. I was soon convinced how impracticable was the attempt. Jacques and Robert watched my every movement with an attentive eye, and I was obliged to abandon the idea. All my hopes now rested upon Claude's not finding the banditti. In that case, according to what I had overheard, we should be permitted to depart unhurt.

I shuddered involuntarily as Baptiste entered the room. He made many apologies for his long absence, but "he had been detained by affairs impossible to be delayed." He then entreated permission for his family to sup at the same table with us, without which, respect would not authorize his taking such a liberty.

Oh!

Oh! how in my heart I curſed the hypocrite! how I loathed his preſence, who was on the point of depriving me of an exiſtence, at that time infinitely dear! I had every reaſon to be ſatisfied with life; I had youth, wealth, rank, and education, and the faireſt proſpects preſented themſelves before me. I ſaw thoſe proſpects on the point of cloſing in the moſt horrible manner: yet was I obliged to diſſimulate, and to receive with a ſemblance of gratitude the falſe civilities of him who held the dagger to my boſom.

The permiſſion which our hoſt demanded was eaſily obtained. We ſeated ourſelves at the table. The baroneſs and myſelf occupied one ſide; the ſons were oppoſite to us, with their backs to the door. Baptiſte took his ſeat by the baroneſs, at the upper end; and the place next to him was left for his wife. She ſoon entered the room, and placed before us a plain but comfortable peaſant's repaſt. Our hoſt thought it neceſſary to apologize for the poorneſs of the ſupper: "he had not been apprized of our coming; he could only offer us ſuch fare as had been intended for his own family."

"But," added he, "ſhould any accident detain my noble gueſts longer than they at preſent intend, I hope to give them a better treatment."

The villain! I well knew the accident to which he alluded. I ſhuddered at the treatment which he taught us to expect.

My companion in danger ſeemed entirely to have got rid of her chagrin at being delayed. She laughed, and converſed with the family with infinite gaiety. I ſtrove, but in vain,

to follow her example. My ſpirits were evidently forced, and the conſtraint which I put upon myſelf eſcaped not Baptiſte's obſervation.

"Come, come, monſieur, cheer up!" ſaid he; "you ſeem not quite recovered from your fatigue. To raiſe your ſpirits, what ſay you to a glaſs of excellent old wine which was left me by my father? God reſt his ſoul, he is in a better world! I ſeldom produce this wine; but as I am not honoured with ſuch gueſts every day, this is an occaſion which deſerves a bottle."

He then gave his wife a key, and inſtructed her where to find the wine of which he ſpoke. She ſeemed by no means pleaſed with the commiſſion; ſhe took the key with an embarraſſed air, and hesitated to quit the table.

"Did you hear me?" ſaid Baptiſte in an angry tone.

Marguerite darted upon him a look of mingled anger and fear, and left the chamber. His eyes followed her ſuſpiciouſly till ſhe had cloſed the door.

She ſoon returned with a bottle ſealed with yellow wax. She placed it upon the table, and gave the key back to her huſband. I ſuſpected that this liquor was not preſented to us without deſign, and I watched Marguerite's movements with inquietude. She was employed in rinſing ſome ſmall horn goblets. As ſhe placed them before Baptiſte, ſhe ſaw that my eye was fixed upon her; and at the moment when ſhe thought herſelf unobſerved by the banditti, ſhe motioned to me with her head not to taſte the liquor. She then reſumed her place.

In

In the mean while our hoſt had drawn the cork, and, filling two of the goblets, offered them to the lady and myſelf. She at firſt made ſome objections, but the inſtances of Baptiſte were ſo urgent, that ſhe was obliged to comply. Fearing to excite ſuſpicion, I heſitated not to take the goblet preſented to me. By its ſmell and colour, I gueſſed it to be champagne; but ſome grains of powder floating upon the top convinced me that it was not unadulterated. However, I dared not to expreſs my repugnance to drinking it; I lifted it to my lips, and ſeemed to be ſwallowing it: ſuddenly ſtarting from my chair, I made the beſt of my way towards a vaſe of water at ſome diſtance, in which Marguerite had been rinſing the goblets. I pretended to ſpit out the wine with diſguſt, and took an opportunity, unperceived, of emptying the liquor into the vaſe.

The banditti ſeemed alarmed at my action. Jacques half roſe from his chair, put his hand into his boſom, and I diſcovered the haft of a dagger. I returned to my ſeat with tranquillity, and affected not to have obſerved their confuſion.

"You have not ſuited my taſte, honeſt friend," ſaid I, addreſſing myſelf to Baptiſte: "I never can drink champagne without its producing a violent illneſs. I ſwallowed a few mouthfuls ere I was aware of its quality, and fear that I ſhall ſuffer for my imprudence."

Baptiſte and Jacques exchanged looks of diſtruſt.

"Perhaps," ſaid Robert, "the ſmell may be diſagreeable to you?"

He

He quitted his chair, and removed the goblet. I obſerved, that he examined whether it was nearly empty.

"He muſt have drank ſufficient," ſaid he to his brother in a low voice, while he reſeated himſelf.

Marguerite looked apprehenſive that I had taſted the liquor. A glance from my eye reaſſured her.

I waited with anxiety for the effects which the beverage would produce upon the lady. I doubted not but the grains which I had obſerved were poiſonous, and lamented that it had been impoſſible for me to warn her of the danger. But a few minutes had elapſed, before I perceived her eyes grow heavy; her head ſank upon her ſhoulder, and ſhe fell into a deep ſleep. I affected not to attend to this circumſtance, and continued my converſation with Baptiſte, with all the outward gaiety in my power to aſſume. But he no longer anſwered me without conſtraint. He eyed me with diſtruſt and aſtoniſhment, and I ſaw that the banditti were frequently whiſpering among themſelves. My ſituation became every moment more painful: I ſuſtained the character of confidence with a worſe grace than ever. Equally afraid of the arrival of their accomplices, and of their ſuſpecting my knowledge of their deſigns, I knew not how to diſſipate the diſtruſt which the banditti evidently entertained for me. In this new dilemma the friendly Marguerite again aſſiſted me. She paſſed behind the chairs of her ſtep-ſons, ſtopped for a moment oppoſite to me, cloſed her eyes, and reclined her head upon her ſhoulder. This hint immediately diſpelled my incertitude.

It

It told me, that I ought to imitate the baroneſs, and pretend that the liquor had taken its full effect upon me. I did ſo, and in a few minutes ſeemed perfectly overcome with ſlumber.

"So!" cried Baptiſte, as I fell back in my chair, "at laſt he ſleeps! I began to think that he had ſcented our deſign, and that we ſhould have been forced to diſpatch him at all events."

"And why not diſpatch him at all events?" enquired the ferocious Jacques: "why leave him the poſſibility of betraying our ſecret? Marguerite, give me one of my piſtols: a ſingle touch of the trigger will finiſh him at once."

"And ſuppoſing," rejoined the father, "ſuppoſing that our friends ſhould not arrive to-night, a pretty figure we ſhould make when the ſervants enquire for him in the morning! No, no, Jacques; we muſt wait for our aſſociates. If they join us, we are ſtrong enough to diſpatch the domeſtics as well as their maſters, and the booty is our own. If Claude does not find the troop, we muſt take patience, and ſuffer the prey to ſlip through our fingers. Ah! boys, boys, had you arrived but five minutes ſooner, the Spaniard would have been done for, and two thouſand piſtoles our own. But you are always out of the way when you are moſt wanted. You are the moſt unlucky rogues——"

"Well, well, father!" anſwered Jacques; "had you been of my mind, all would have been over by this time. You, Robert, Claude, and myſelf—why the ſtrangers were but double the number, and I warrant you we might have

have maſtered them. However, Claude is gone; 'tis too late to think of it now. We muſt wait patiently for the arrival of the gang; and if the travellers eſcape us to-night, we muſt take care to way-lay them to morrow."

"True! true!" ſaid Baptiſte; "Marguerite, have you given the ſleeping draught to the waiting women?"

She replied in the affirmative.

"All then is ſafe. Come, come, boys; whatever falls out, we have no reaſon to complain of this adventure. We run no danger, may gain much, and can loſe nothing."

At this moment I heard a trampling of horſes. Oh! how dreadful was the ſound to my ears! A cold ſweat flowed down my forehead, and I felt all the terrors of impending death. I was by no means reaſſured by hearing the compaſſionate Marguerite exclaim, in the accents of deſpair,

"Almighty God! they are loſt."

Luckily the woodman and his ſons were too much occupied by the arrival of their aſſociates to attend to me, or the violence of my agitation would have convinced them that my ſleep was feigned.

"Open! open!" exclaimed ſeveral voices on the outſide of the cottage.

"Yes! yes!" cried Baptiſte joyfully; "they are our friends, ſure enough. Now then our booty is certain. Away! lads, away! Lead them to the barn; you know what is to be done there."

Robert haſtened to open the door of the cottage.

"But firſt," ſaid Jacques, taking up his arms, "firſt let me diſpatch theſe ſleepers."

"No,

"No, no, no!" replied his father: Go you to the barn, where your preſence is wanted. Leave me to take care of theſe and the women above."

Jacques obeyed, and followed his brother. They ſeemed to converſe with the new-comers for a few minutes; after which I heard the robbers diſmount, and, as I conjectured, bend their courſe towards the barn.

"So! that is wiſely done!" muttered Baptiſte; "they have quitted their horſes, that they may fall upon the ſtrangers by ſurpriſe. Good! good! and now to buſineſs."

I heard him approach a ſmall cupboard which was fixed up in a diſtant part of the room, and unlock it. At this moment I felt myſelf ſhaken gently.

"Now! now!" whiſpered Marguerite.

I opened my eyes. Baptiſte ſtood with his back towards me. No one elſe was in the room ſave Marguerite and the ſleeping lady. The villain had taken a dagger from the cupboard, and ſeemed examining whether it was ſufficiently ſharp. I had neglected to furniſh myſelf with arms; but I perceived this to be my only chance of eſcaping, and reſolved not to loſe the opportunity. I ſprang from my ſeat, darted ſuddenly upon Baptiſte, and, claſping my hands round his throat, preſſed it ſo forcibly as to prevent his uttering a ſingle cry. You may remember, that I was remarkable at Salamanca for the power of my arm. It now rendered me an eſſential ſervice. Surpriſed, terrified, and breathleſs, the villain was by no means an equal antagoniſt. I threw him upon the ground; I graſped him ſtill tighter; and while I fixed him without motion upon

upon the floor, Marguerite, wreſting the dagger from his hand, plunged it repeatedly in his heart till he expired.

No ſooner was this horrible but neceſſary act perpetrated, than Marguerite called on me to follow her.

"Flight is our only refuge," ſaid ſhe, "quick! quick! away!"

I heſitated not to obey her; but unwilling to leave the baroneſs a victim to the vengeance of the robbers, I raiſed her in my arms ſtill ſleeping, and haſtened after Marguerite. The horſes of the banditti were faſtened near the door. My conductreſs ſprang upon one of them. I followed her example, placed the baroneſs before me, and ſpurred on my horſe. Our only hope was to reach Straſbourg, which was much nearer than the perfidious Claude had aſſured me. Marguerite was well acquainted with the road, and galloped on before me. We were obliged to paſs by the barn, where the robbers were ſlaughtering our domeſtics. The door was open: we diſtinguiſhed the ſhrieks of the dying, and imprecations of the murderers. What I felt at this moment language is unable to deſcribe.

Jacques heard the trampling of our horſes, as we ruſhed by the barn. He flew to the door with a burning torch in his hand, and eaſily recogniſed the fugitives.

"Betrayed! betrayed!" he ſhouted to his companions.

Inſtantly they left their bloody work, and haſtened to regain their horſes. We heard no more I buried my ſpurs in the ſides of my courſer, and Marguerite goaded on hers with the poniard which had already rendered us

ſuch

ſuch good ſervice. We flew like lightning, and gained the open plains. Already was Straſbourg's ſteeple in ſight, when we heard the robbers purſuing us. Marguerite looked back, and diſtinguiſhed our followers deſcending a ſmall hill at no great diſtance. It was in vain that we urged on our horſes: the noiſe approached nearer every moment.

"We are loſt!" ſhe exclaimed; "the villains gain upon us!"

"On! on!" replied I; "I hear the trampling of horſes coming from the town."

We redoubled our exertions, and were ſoon aware of a numerous band of cavaliers, who came towards us at full ſpeed. They were on the point of paſſing us.

"Stay! ſtay!" ſhrieked Marguerite; "ſave us! for God's ſake, ſave us!"

The foremoſt, who ſeemed to act as guide, immediately reined in his ſteed.

"'Tis ſhe! 'tis ſhe!" exclaimed he, ſpringing upon the ground: "Stop, my lord, ſtop! they are ſafe! 'tis my mother!"

At the ſame moment Marguerite threw herſelf from her horſe, claſped him in her arms, and covered him with kiſſes. The other cavaliers ſtopped at the exclamation.

"The baroneſs Lindenberg!" cried another of the ſtrangers eagerly: "Where is ſhe? Is ſhe not with you?"

He ſtopped on beholding her lying ſenſeleſs in my arms. Haſtily he caught her from me. The profound ſleep in which ſhe was plunged, made him at firſt tremble for her life; but the beating of her heart ſoon re-aſſured him.

"God be thanked!" ſaid he, "ſhe has eſcaped unhurt."

I inter-

I interrupted his joy by pointing out the brigands who continued to approach. No ſooner had I mentioned them, than the greateſt part of the company, which appeared to be chiefly compoſed of ſoldiers, haſtened forward to meet them. The villains ſtaid not to receive their attack. Perceiving their danger, they turned the heads of their horſes, and fled into the wood, whither they were followed by our preſervers. In the mean while the ſtranger, whom I gueſſed to be the baron Lindenberg, after thanking me for my care of his lady, propoſed our returning with all ſpeed to the town. The baroneſs, on whom the effects of the opiate had not ceaſed to operate, was placed before him; Marguerite and her ſon remounted their horſes; the baron's domeſtics followed, and we ſoon arrived at the inn, where he had taken his apartments.

This was at the Auſtrian Eagle, where my banker, whom before my quitting Paris I had appriſed of my intention to viſit Straſbourg, had prepared lodgings for me. I rejoiced at this circumſtance. It gave me an opportunity of cultivating the baron's acquaintance, which I foreſaw would be of uſe to me in Germany. Immediately upon our arrival, the lady was conveyed to bed. A phyſician was ſent for, who preſcribed a medicine likely to counteract the effects of the ſleepy potion; and after it had been poured down her throat, ſhe was committed to the care of the hoſteſs. The baron then addreſſed himſelf to me, and entreated me to recount the particulars of this adventure. I complied with his requeſt inſtantaneouſly; for, in pain reſpecting Stephano's fate, whom I had been compelled to abandon

to

to the cruelty of the banditti, I found it impoſſible for me to repoſe till I had ſome news of him. I received but too ſoon the intelligence that my truſty ſervant had periſhed. The ſoldiers who had purſued the brigands, returned while I was employed in relating my adventure to the baron. By their account, I found that the robbers had been overtaken. Guilt and true courage are incompatible: they had thrown themſelves at the feet of their purſuers, had ſurrendered themſelves without ſtriking a blow, had diſcovered their ſecret retreat, made known their ſignals by which the reſt of the gang might be ſeized, and, in ſhort, had betrayed every mark of cowardice and baſeneſs. By this means the whole of the band, conſiſting of near ſixty perſons, had been made priſoners, bound, and conducted to Straſbourg. Some of the ſoldiers haſtened to the cottage, one of the banditti ſerving them as guide. Their firſt viſit was to the fatal barn, where they were fortunate enough to find two of the baron's ſervants ſtill alive, though deſperately wounded. The reſt had expired beneath the ſwords of the robbers, and of theſe my unhappy Stephano was one.

Alarmed at our eſcape, the robbers, in their haſte to overtake us, had neglected to viſit the cottage; in conſequence, the ſoldiers found the two waiting-women unhurt, and buried in the ſame death-like ſlumber which had overpowered their miſtreſs. There was nobody elſe found in the cottage, except a child not above four years old, which the ſoldiers brought away with them. We were buſying ourſelves with conjectures reſpecting the birth of

of this little unfortunate, when Marguerite ruſhed into the room with the baby in her arms. She fell at the feet of the officer who was making us this report, and bleſſed him a thouſand times for the preſervation of her child.

When the firſt burſt of maternal tenderneſs was over, I beſought her to declare by what means ſhe had been united to a man whoſe principles ſeemed ſo totally diſcordant with her own. She bent her eyes downwards, and wiped a few tears from her cheek.

"Gentlemen," ſaid ſhe, after a ſilence of ſome minutes, "I would requeſt a favour of you. You have a right to know on whom you confer an obligation; I will not, therefore, ſtifle a confeſſion which covers me with ſhame; but permit me to compriſe it in as few words as poſſible.

"I was born in Straſbourg, of reſpectable parents; their names I muſt at preſent conceal. My father ſtill lives, and deſerves not to be involved in my infamy. If you grant my requeſt, you ſhall be informed of my family name. A villain made himſelf maſter of my affections, and to follow him I quitted my father's houſe. Yet, though my paſſions overpowered my virtue, I ſunk not into that degeneracy of vice but too commonly the lot of women who make the firſt falſe ſtep. I loved my ſeducer, dearly loved him! I was true to his bed: this baby, and the youth who warned you, my lord baron, of your lady's danger, are the pledges of our affection. Even at this moment I lament his loſs, though 'tis to him that I owe all the miſeries of my exiſtence.

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"He was of noble birth, but he had ſquandered away his paternal inheritance. His relations conſidered him as a diſgrace to their name, and utterly diſcarded him. His exceſſes drew upon him the indignation of the police. He was obliged to fly from Straſbourg; and ſaw no other reſource from beggary than an union with the banditti who infeſted the neighbouring foreſt, and whoſe troop was chiefly compoſed of young men of family in the ſame predicament with himſelf. I was determined not to forſake him. I followed him to the cavern of the brigands, and ſhared with him the miſery inſeparable from a life of pillage. But though I was aware that our exiſtence was ſupported by plunder, I knew not all the horrible circumſtances attached to my lover's profeſſion: theſe he concealed from me with the utmoſt care. He was conſcious that my ſentiments were not ſufficiently depraved to look without horror upon aſſaſſination. He ſuppoſed, and with juſtice, that I ſhould fly with deteſtation from the embraces of a murderer. Eight years of poſſeſſion had not abated his love for me; and he cautiouſly removed from my knowledge every circumſtance which might lead me to ſuſpect the crimes in which he but too often participated. He ſucceeded perfectly. It was not till after my ſeducer's death that I diſcovered his hands to be ſtained with the blood of the innocent.

"One fatal night he was brought back to the cavern, covered with wounds: he received them in attacking an Engliſh traveller, whom his companions immediately ſacrificed to their reſentment. He had only time to entreat my pardon

pardon for all the ſorrows which he had cauſed me; he preſſed my hand to his lips, and expired. My grief was inexpreſſible. As ſoon as its violence abated, I reſolved to return to Straſbourg, to throw myſelf, with my two children, at my father's feet, and implore his forgiveneſs, though I little hoped to obtain it. What was my conſternation when informed, that no one entruſted with the ſecret of their retreat was ever permitted to quit the troop of the banditti; that I muſt give up all hopes of ever rejoining ſociety, and conſent inſtantly to accept one of their band for my huſband! My prayers and remonſtrances were vain. They caſt lots to decide to whoſe poſſeſſion I ſhould fall. I became the property of the infamous Baptiſte. A robber, who had once been a monk, pronounced over us a burleſque rather than a religious ceremony: I and my children were delivered into the hands of my new huſband, and he conveyed us immediately to his home.

"He aſſured me that he had long entertained for me the moſt ardent regard; but that friendſhip for my deceaſed lover had obliged him to ſtifle his deſires. He endeavoured to reconcile me to my fate, and for ſome time treated me with reſpect and gentleneſs. At length, finding that my averſion rather increaſed than diminiſhed, he obtained thoſe favours by violence which I perſiſted to refuſe him. No reſource remained for me but to bear my ſorrows with patience; I was conſcious that I deſerved them but too well. Flight was forbidden. My children were in the power of Baptiſte: and he had ſworn, that if I attempted to eſcape, their lives ſhould pay for it. I had had too many opportunities of witneſſing the barbarity of his nature,

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to doubt his fulfilling his oath to the very letter. Sad experience had convinced me of the horrors of my ſituation. My firſt lover had carefully concealed them from me; Baptiſte rather rejoiced in opening my eyes to the cruelties of his profeſſion, and ſtrove to familiariſe me with blood and ſlaughter.

"My nature was licentious and warm, but not cruel: my conduct had been imprudent, but my heart was not unprincipled. Judge, then, what I muſt have felt at being a continual witneſs of crimes the moſt horrible and revolting! Judge how I muſt have grieved at being united to a man, who received the unſuſpecting gueſt with an air of openneſs and hoſpitality, at the very moment that he meditated his deſtruction! Chagrin and diſcontent preyed upon my conſtitution; the few charms beſtowed on me by nature withered away, and the dejection of my countenance denoted the ſufferings of my heart. I was tempted a thouſand times to put an end to my exiſtence; but the remembrance of my children held my hand. I trembled to leave my dear boys in my tyrant's power, and trembled yet more for their virtue than their lives. The ſecond was ſtill too young to benefit by my inſtructions; but in the heart of my eldeſt I laboured unceaſingly to plant thoſe principles which might enable him to avoid the crimes of his parents. He liſtened to me with docility, or rather with eagerneſs. Even at his early age, he ſhewed that he was not calculated for the ſociety of villains; and the only comfort which I enjoyed among my ſorrows, was to witneſs the dawning virtues of my Theodore.

"Such was my ſituation when the perfidy of Don Alphonſo's poſtillion conducted him to the

cottage.

cottage. His youth, air, and manners intereſted me moſt forcibly in his behalf. The abſence of my huſband's ſons gave me an opportunity which I had long wiſhed to find, and I reſolved to riſque every thing to preſerve the ſtranger.

The vigilance of Baptiſte prevented me from warning Don Alphonſo of his danger. I knew that my betraying the ſecret would be immediately puniſhed with death; and however embittered was my life by calamities, I wanted courage to ſacrifice it for the ſake of preſerving that of another perſon. My only hope reſted upon procuring ſuccour from Straſbourg. At this I reſolved to try; and ſhould an opportunity offer of warning Don Alphonſo of his danger unobſerved, I was determined to ſeize it with avidity. By Baptiſte's orders I went up ſtairs to make the ſtranger's bed: I ſpread upon it ſheets in which a traveller had been murdered but a few nights before, and which ſtill were ſtained with blood. I hoped that theſe marks would not eſcape the vigilance of our gueſt, and that he would collect from them the deſigns of my perfidious huſband. Neither was this the only ſtep which I took to preſerve the ſtranger. Theodore was confined to his bed by illneſs. I ſtole into his room unobſerved by my tyrant, communicated to him my project, and he entered into it with eagerneſs. He roſe in ſpite of his malady, and dreſſed himſelf with all ſpeed. I faſtened one of the ſheets round his arms, and lowered him from the window. He flew to the ſtable, took Claude's horſe, and haſtened to Straſbourg. Had he been accoſted by the banditti, he was to have declared himſelf ſent upon a meſſage by Baptiſte, but fortunately he reached the town without meeting any obſtacle.

cle. Immediately upon his arrival at Straſbourg, he entreated aſſiſtance from the magiſtrate: his ſtory paſſed from mouth to mouth, and at length came to the knowledge of my lord the baron. Anxious for the ſafety of his lady, who he knew would be upon the road that evening, it ſtruck him that ſhe might have fallen into the power of the robbers. He accompanied Theodore, who guided the ſoldiers towards the cottage, and arrived juſt in time to ſave us from falling once more into the hands of our enemies."

Here I interrupted Marguerite to enquire why the ſleepy potion had been preſented to me. She ſaid that Baptiſte ſuppoſed me to have arms about me, and wiſhed to incapacitate me from making reſiſtance: it was a precaution which he always took, ſince, as the travellers had no hopes of eſcaping, deſpair would have incited them to ſell their lives dearly.

The baron then deſired Marguerite to inform him what were her preſent plans. I joined him in declaring my readineſs to ſhew my gratitude to her for the preſervation of my life.

"Diſguſted with a world," ſhe replied, "in which I have met with nothing but misfortunes, my only wiſh is to retire into a convent. But firſt I muſt provide for my children. I find that my mother is no more—probably driven to an untimely grave by my deſertion. My father is ſtill living. He is not a hard man. Perhaps, gentlemen, in ſpite of my ingratitude and imprudence, your interceſſions

may induce him to forgive me, and take charge of his unfortunate grandſons. If you obtain this boon for me, you will repay my ſervices a thouſand-fold."

Both the baron and myſelf aſſured Marguerite, that we would ſpare no pains to obtain her pardon: and that, even ſhould her father be inflexible, ſhe need be under no apprehenſions reſpecting the fate of her children. I engaged myſelf to provide for Theodore, and the baron promiſed to take the youngeſt under his protection. The grateful mother thanked us with tears for what ſhe called generoſity, but which in fact was no more than a proper ſenſe of our obligations to her. She then left the room to put her little boy to bed, whom fatigue and ſleep had completely overpowered.

The baroneſs, on recovering, and being informed from what dangers I had reſcued her, ſet no bounds to the expreſſions of her gratitude. She was joined ſo warmly by her huſband in preſſing me to accompany them to their caſtle in Bavaria, that I found it impoſſible to reſiſt their entreaties. During a week which we paſſed at Straſbourg, the intereſts of Marguerite were not forgotten. In our application to her father we ſucceeded as amply as we could wiſh. The good old man had loſt his wife. He had no children but this unfortunate daughter, of whom he had received no news for almoſt fourteen years. He was ſurrounded by diſtant relations, who waited with impatience for his deceaſe, in order to get poſſeſſion of his money. When therefore Marguerite

guerite appeared again ſo unexpectedly, he conſidered her as a gift from Heaven. He received her and her children with open arms, and inſiſted upon their eſtabliſhing themſelves in his houſe without delay. The diſappointed couſins were obliged to give place. The old man would not hear of his daughter's retiring into a convent, He ſaid that ſhe was too neceſſary to his happineſs, and ſhe was eaſily perſuaded to relinquiſh her deſigns. But no perſuaſions could induce Theodore to give up the plan which I had at firſt marked out for him. He had attached himſelf to me moſt ſincerely during my ſtay at Straſbourg; and when I was on the point of leaving it, he beſought me with tears to take him into my ſervice. He ſet forth all his little talents in the moſt favourable colours, and tried to convince me that I ſhould find him of infinite uſe to me upon the road. I was unwilling to charge myſelf with a lad ſcarcely turned of thirteen, who I knew could only be a burthen to me: however I could not reſiſt the entreaties of this affectionate youth, who in fact poſſeſſed a thouſand eſtimable qualities. With ſome difficulty he perſuaded his relations to let him follow me; and that permiſſion once obtained, he was dubbed with the title of my page. Having paſſed a week at Straſbourg, Theodore and myſelf ſet out for Bavaria, in company with the baron and his lady. Theſe latter, as well as myſelf, had forced Marguerite to accept ſeveral preſents of value, both for herſelf and her youngeſt ſon. On leaving her, I promiſed his mother faithfully that I would reſtore Theodore to her within the year.

I have related this adventure at length, Lorenzo, that you might understand the means by which "the adventurer Alphonso d'Alvarada got introduced into the castle of Lindenberg." Judge from this specimen, how much faith should be given to your aunt's assertions.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Avaunt! and quit my ſight! Let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowleſs; thy blood is cold;
Thou haſt no ſpeculation in thoſe eyes
Which thou doſt glare with! Hence, horrible ſhadow!
Unreal mockery, hence!

MACBETH.

CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF DON RAYMOND.

MY journey was uncommonly agreeable: I found the baron a man of ſome ſenſe, but little knowledge of the world. He had paſſed a great part of his life without ſtirring beyond the precincts of his own domains, and conſequently his manners were far from being the moſt poliſhed; but he was hearty, good-humoured and friendly. His attention to me was all that I could wiſh, and I had every reaſon to be ſatisfied with his behaviour. His ruling paſſion was hunting, which he had brought himſelf to conſider as a ſerious occupation; and, when talking over ſome remarkable chace, he treated the ſubject with as much gravity as it had been a battle on which the fate of two kingdoms was depending. I happened to be a tolerable ſportſman: ſoon

after my arrival at Lindenberg, I gave ſome proofs of my dexterity. The baron immediately marked me down for a man of genius, and vowed to me an eternal friendſhip.

That friendſhip was become to me by no means indifferent. At the caſtle of Lindenberg, I beheld for the firſt time your ſiſter, the lovely Agnes. For me, whoſe heart was unoccupied, and who grieved at the void, to ſee her and to love her were the ſame. I found in Agnes all that was requiſite to ſecure my affection. She was then ſcarcely ſixteen; her perſon light and elegant was already formed; ſhe poſſeſſed ſeveral talents in perfection, particularly thoſe of muſic and drawing: her character was gay, open, and good-humoured; and the graceful ſimplicity of her dreſs and manners formed an advantageous contraſt to the art and ſtudied coquetry of the Pariſian dames, whom I had juſt quitted. From the moment that I beheld her, I felt the moſt lively intereſt in her fate. I made many enquiries reſpecting her of the baroneſs.

"She is my niece," replied that lady; "you are ſtill ignorant, Don Alphonſo, that I am your country-woman. I am ſiſter to the duke of Medina Celi. Agnes is the daughter of my ſecond brother, Don Gaſton: ſhe has been deſtined to the convent from her cradle, and will ſoon make her profeſſion at Madrid."

[Here Lorenzo interrupted the marquis by an exclamation of ſurpriſe.

"Intended for the convent from her cradle!" ſaid he: "By heaven, this is the firſt word that I ever heard of ſuch a deſign."

"I believe

"I believe it, my dear Lorenzo," anſwered Don Raymond; "but you muſt liſten to me with patience. You will not be leſs ſurpriſed, when I relate ſome particulars of your family ſtill unknown to you, and which I have learnt from the mouth of Agnes herſelf."

He then reſumed his narrative as follows:]

You cannot but be aware, that your parents were unfortunately ſlaves to the groſſeſt ſuperſtition: when this foible was called into play, their every other ſentiment, their every other paſſion, yielded to its irreſiſtible ſtrength. While ſhe was big with Agnes, your mother was ſeized by a dangerous illneſs, and given over by her phyſicians. In this ſituation Donna Ineſilla vowed, that if ſhe recovered from her malady, the child then living in her boſom, if a girl, ſhould be dedicated to St. Clare; if a boy, to St. Benedict. Her prayers were heard; ſhe got rid of her complaint; Agnes entered the world alive, and was immediately deſtined to the ſervice of St. Clare.

Don Gaſton readily chimed in with his lady's wiſhes: but knowing the ſentiments of the duke, his brother, reſpecting a monaſtic life, it was determined that your ſiſter's deſtination ſhould be carefully concealed from him. The better to guard the ſecret, it was reſolved that Agnes ſhould accompany her aunt, Donna Rodolpha, into Germany, whither that lady was on the point of following her new-married huſband, baron Lindenberg. On her arrival at that eſtate, the young Agnes was put into a convent, ſituated but a few miles from the caſtle. The nuns, to whom her education was confided, performed their charge with exacti-

tude: they made her a perfect miſtreſs of many accompliſhments, and ſtrove to infuſe into her mind a taſte for the retirement and tranquil pleaſures of a convent. But a ſecret inſtinct made the young recluſe ſenſible that ſhe was not born for ſolitude: in all the freedom of youth and gaiety, ſhe ſcrupled not to treat as ridiculous many ceremonies which the nuns regarded with awe; and ſhe was never more happy than when her lively imagination inſpired her with ſome ſcheme to plague the ſtiff lady abbeſs, or the ugly ill-tempered old portereſs. She looked with diſguſt upon the proſpect before her: however, no alternative was offered to her, and ſhe ſubmitted to the decree of her parents, though not without ſecret repining.

That repugnance ſhe had not art enough to conceal long: Don Gaſton was informed of it. Alarmed, Lorenzo, leſt your affection for her ſhould oppoſe itſelf to his projects, and leſt you ſhould poſitively object to your ſiſter's miſery, he reſolved to keep the whole affair from *your* knowledge as well as the duke's, till the ſacrifice ſhould be conſummated. The ſeaſon of her taking the veil was fixed for the time when you ſhould be upon your travels: in the mean while no hint was dropped of Donna Ineſilla's fatal vow. Your ſiſter was never permitted to know your direction. All your letters were read before ſhe received them, and thoſe parts effaced which were likely to nouriſh her inclination for the world: her anſwers were dictated either by her aunt, or by dame Cunegonda, her governeſs. Theſe particulars

ticulars I learnt partly from Agnes, partly from the baroneſs herſelf.

I immediately determined upon reſcuing this lovely girl from a fate ſo contrary to her inclinations, and ill-ſuited to her merit. I endeavoured to ingratiate myſelf into her favour: I boaſted of my friendſhip and intimacy with you. She liſtened to me with avidity; ſhe ſeemed to devour my words while I ſpoke in your praiſe, and her eyes thanked me for my affection to her brother. My conſtant and unremitted attention at length gained me her heart, and with difficulty I obliged her to confeſs that ſhe loved me. When, however, I propoſed her quitting the caſtle of Lindenberg, ſhe rejected the idea in poſitive terms.

"Be generous, Alphonſo," ſhe ſaid; "you poſſeſs my heart, but uſe not the gift ignobly. Employ not your aſcendancy over me in perſuading me to take a ſtep at which I ſhould hereafter have to bluſh. I am young and deſerted: my brother, my only friend is ſeparated from me, and my other relations act with me as my enemies. Take pity on my unprotected ſituation. Inſtead of ſeducing me to an action which would cover me with ſhame, ſtrive rather to gain the affections of thoſe who govern me. The baron eſteems you. My aunt, to others ever harſh, proud and contemptuous, remembers that you reſcued her from the hands of murderers, and wears with you alone the appearance of kindneſs and benignity. Try then your influence over my guardians. If they conſent to our union, my hand is yours. From your account of my brother, I cannot doubt your obtaining his approbation: and

when they find the impoſſibility of executing their deſign, I truſt that my parents will excuſe my diſobedience, and expiate by ſome other ſacrifice my mother's fatal vow."

From the firſt moment that I beheld Agnes, I had endeavoured to conciliate the favour of her relations. Authoriſed by the confeſſion of her regard, I redoubled my exertions. My principal battery was directed againſt the baroneſs: it was eaſy to diſcover, that her word was law in the caſtle: her huſband paid her the moſt abſolute ſubmiſſion, and conſidered her as a ſuperior being. She was about forty: in her youth ſhe had been a beauty; but her charms had been upon that large ſcale which can but ill ſuſtain the ſhock of years: however, ſhe ſtill poſſeſſed ſome remains of them. Her underſtanding was ſtrong and excellent when not obſcured by prejudice, which unluckily was ſeldom the caſe. Her paſſions were violent: ſhe ſpared no pains to gratify them, and purſued with unremitting vengeance thoſe who oppoſed themſelves to her wiſhes. The warmeſt of friends, the moſt inveterate of enemies, ſuch was the baroneſs Lindenberg.

I laboured inceſſantly to pleaſe her: unluckily I ſucceeded but too well. She ſeemed gratified by my attention, and treated me with a diſtinction accorded by her to no one elſe. One of my daily occupations was reading to her for ſeveral hours: thoſe hours I ſhould much rather have paſſed with Agnes; but as I was conſcious that complaiſance for her aunt would advance our union, I ſubmitted with a good grace to the penance impoſed upon me. Donna Rodol-

Rodolpha's library was principally compoſed of old Spaniſh romances: theſe were her favourite ſtudies, and once a day one of theſe unmerciful volumes was put regularly into my hands. I read the weariſome adventures of "*Perceforeſt*," "*Tirante the White*," "*Palmerin of England*," and "*the Knight of the Sun*," till the book was on the point of falling from my hands through ennui. However, the increaſing pleaſure which the baroneſs ſeemed to take in my ſociety, encouraged me to perſevere; and latterly ſhe ſhewed for me a partiality ſo marked, that Agnes adviſed me to ſeize the firſt opportunity of declaring our mutual paſſion to her aunt.

One evening I was alone with Donna Rodolpha, in her own apartment. As our readings generally treated of love, Agnes was never permitted to aſſiſt at them. I was juſt congratulating myſelf on having finiſhed "*the Loves of Triſtan and the Queen Iſeult*— "

"Ah! the unfortunates!" cried the baroneſs: "How ſay you, Segnor? Do you think it poſſible for man to feel an attachment ſo diſintereſted and ſincere?"

"I cannot doubt it," replied I; "my own heart furniſhes me with the certainty. Ah! Donna Rodolpha, might I but hope for your approbation of my love! might I but confeſs the name of my miſtreſs, without incurring your reſentment!"

She interrupted me.

"Suppoſe I were to ſpare you that confeſſion? Suppoſe I were to acknowledge that the object of your deſires is not unknown to me? Suppoſe I were to ſay, that ſhe returns your affection,

affection, and laments not leſs ſincerely than yourſelf the unhappy vows which ſeparate her from you?"

"Ah! Donna Rodolpha!" I exclaimed, throwing myſelf upon my knees before her, and preſſing her hand to my lips, "you have diſcovered my ſecret! What is your deciſion? Muſt I deſpair, or may I reckon upon your favour?"

She withdrew not the hand which I held; but ſhe turned from me, and covered her face with the other.

"How can I refuſe it you?" ſhe replied: "Ah! Don Alphonſo, I have long perceived to whom your attentions were directed, but till now I perceived not the impreſſion which they made upon my heart. At length, I can no longer hide my weakneſs either from myſelf or from you. I yield to the violence of my paſſion, and own that I adore you! For three long months I ſtifled my deſires: but growing ſtronger by reſiſtance, I ſubmit to their impetuoſity. Pride, fear, and honour, reſpect for myſelf, and my engagements to the baron, all are vanquiſhed. I ſacrifice them to my love for you, and it ſtill ſeems to me that I pay too mean a price for your poſſeſſion."

She paused for an anſwer.—Judge, my Lorenzo, what muſt have been my confuſion at this diſcovery. I at once ſaw all the magnitude of this obſtacle, which I had myſelf raiſed to my happineſs. The baroneſs had placed thoſe attentions to her own account, which I had merely paid her for the ſake of Agnes: and the ſtrength of her expreſſions, the looks which

accompanied

accompanied them, and my knowledge of her revengeful diſpoſitions, made me tremble for myſelf and my beloved. I was ſilent for ſome minutes. I knew not how to reply to her declaration: I could only reſolve to clear up the miſtake without delay, and for the preſent to conceal from her knowledge the name of my miſtreſs. No ſooner had ſhe avowed her paſſion, than the tranſports which before were evident in my features gave place to conſternation and conſtraint. I dropped her hand, and roſe from my knees. The change in my countenance did not eſcape her obſervation.

"What means this ſilence?" ſaid ſhe in a trembling voice: "Where is that joy which you led me to expect?"

"Forgive me, Segnora," I anſwered, "if what neceſſity forces from me ſhould ſeem harſh and ungrateful. To encourage you in an error, which, however it may flatter myſelf, muſt prove to you the ſource of diſappointment, would make me appear criminal in every eye. Honour obliges me to inform you, that you have miſtaken for the ſolicitude of love what was only the attention of friendſhip. The latter ſentiment is that which I wiſhed to excite in your boſom: to entertain a warmer, reſpect for you forbids me, and gratitude for the baron's generous treatment. Perhaps theſe reaſons would not be ſufficient to ſhield me from your attractions, were it not that my affections are already beſtowed upon another. You have charms, Segnora, which might captivate the moſt inſenſible; no heart unoccupied could reſiſt them. Happy is it for me, that

that mine is no longer in my poſſeſſion, or I ſhould have to reproach myſelf for ever with having violated the laws of hoſpitality. Recollect yourſelf, noble lady! recollect what is owed by you to honour, by me to the baron, and replace by eſteem and friendſhip thoſe ſentiments which I never can return."

The baroneſs turned pale at this unexpected and poſitive declaration: ſhe doubted whether ſhe ſlept or woke. At length recovering from her ſurpriſe, conſternation gave place to rage, and the blood ruſhed back into her cheeks with violence.

"Villain!" ſhe cried; "Monſter of deceit! Thus is the avowal of my love received? Is it thus that . . . . but, no, no! it cannot, it ſhall not be! Alphonſo, behold me at your feet! Be witneſs of my deſpair! Look with pity on a woman who loves you with ſincere affection! She who poſſeſſes your heart, how has ſhe merited ſuch a treaſure? What ſacrifice has ſhe made to you? What raiſes her above Rodolpha?"

I endeavoured to lift her from her knees.

"For God's ſake, Segnora, reſtrain theſe tranſports; they diſgrace yourſelf and me. Your exclamations may be heard, and your ſecret divulged to your attendants. I ſee that my preſence only irritates you: permit me to retire."

I prepared to quit the apartment: the baroneſs caught me ſuddenly by the arm.

"And who is this happy rival?" ſaid ſhe in a menacing tone; "I will know her name, and *when* I know it . . . . . ! She is ſome one in my power; you entreated my favour, my protec-

protection! Let me but find her, let me but know who dares to rob me of your heart, and she shall suffer every torment which jealousy and disappointment can inflict. Who is she? Answer me this moment. Hope not to conceal her from my vengeance! Spies shall be set over you; every step, every look shall be watched; your eyes will discover my rival; I shall know her; and when she is found, tremble, Alphonso, for her and for yourself."

As she uttered these last words, her fury mounted to such a pitch as to stop her powers of respiration. She panted, groaned, and at length fainted away. As she was falling I caught her in my arms, and placed her upon a sopha. Then hastening to the door, I summoned her women to her assistance; I committed her to their care, and seized the opportunity of escaping.

Agitated and confused beyond expression, I bent my steps towards the garden. The benignity with which the baroness had listened to me at first, raised my hopes to the highest pitch: I imagined her to have perceived my attachment for her niece, and to approve of it. Extreme was my disappointment at understanding the true purport of her discourse. I knew not what course to take: the superstition of the parents of Agnes, aided by her aunt's unfortunate passion, seemed to oppose such obstacles to our union as were almost insurmountable.

As I passed by a low parlour, whose windows looked into the garden, through the door which stood half open I observed Agnes seated

at

at a table. She was occupied in drawing, and ſeveral unfiniſhed ſketches were ſcattered round her. I entered, ſtill undetermined whether I ſhould acquaint her with the declaration of the baroneſs.

"Oh! is it only you?" ſaid ſhe, raiſing her head: "You are no ſtranger, and I ſhall continue my occupation without ceremony. Take a chair, and ſeat yourſelf by me."

I obeyed, and placed myſelf near the table. Unconſcious what I was doing, and totally occupied by the ſcene which had juſt paſſed, I took up ſome of the drawings, and caſt my eyes over them. One of the ſubjects ſtruck me from its ſingularity. It repreſented the great hall of the caſtle of Lindenberg. A door conducting to a narrow ſtair-caſe ſtood half open. In the fore-ground appeared a group of figures, placed in the moſt groteſque attitudes; terror was expreſſed upon every countenance. Here was one upon his knees, with his eyes caſt up to heaven, and praying moſt devoutly; there, another was creeping away upon all fours. Some hid their faces in their cloaks, or the laps of their companions; ſome had concealed themſelves beneath a table, on which the remnants of a feaſt were viſible; while others, with gaping mouths and eyes wide-ſtretched, pointed to a figure ſuppoſed to have created this diſturbance. It repreſented a female of more than human ſtature, clothed in the habit of ſome religious order. Her face was veiled; on her arm hung a chaplet of beads; her dreſs was in ſeveral places ſtained with the blood which trickled from a wound upon her boſom. In one hand ſhe held a lamp,

lamp, in the other a large knife, and she seemed advancing towards the iron gates of the hall.

"What does this mean, Agnes?" said I: "Is this some invention of your own?"

She cast her eyes upon the drawing.

"Oh! no," she replied; "'tis the invention of much wiser heads than mine. But can you possibly have lived at Lindenberg for three whole months without hearing of the bleeding nun?"

"You are the first who ever mentioned the name to me. Pray, who may the lady be?"

"That is more than I can pretend to tell you. All my knowledge of her history comes from an old tradition in this family, which has been handed down from father to son, and is firmly credited throughout the baron's domains. Nay, the baron believes it himself; and as for my aunt, who has a natural turn for the marvellous, she would sooner doubt the veracity of the Bible than of the bleeding nun. Shall I tell you this history?"

I answered, that she would oblige me much by relating it: she resumed her drawing, and then proceeded as follows in a tone of burlesqued gravity:

"It is surprising that in all the chronicles of past times this remarkable personage is never once mentioned. Fain would I recount to you her life; but unluckily till after her death she was never known to have existed. Then first did she think it necessary to make some noise in the world, and with that intention

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tion ſhe made bold to ſeize upon the caſtle of Lindenberg. Having a good taſte, ſhe took up her abode in the beſt room of the houſe; and once eſtabliſhed there, ſhe began to amuſe herſelf by knocking about the tables and chairs in the middle of the night. Perhaps ſhe was a bad ſleeper, but this I have never been able to aſcertain. According to the tradition, this entertainment commenced about a century ago. It was accompanied with ſhrieking, howling, groaning, ſwearing and many other agreeable noiſes of the ſame kind. But though one particular room was more eſpecially honoured with her viſits, ſhe did not entirely confine herſelf to it. She occaſionally ventured into the old galleries, paced up and down the ſpacious halls; or, ſometimes ſtopping at the doors of the chambers, ſhe wept and wailed there to the univerſal terror of the inhabitants. In theſe nocturnal excurſions ſhe was ſeen by different people, who all deſcribe her appearance as you behold it here traced by the hand of her unworthy hiſtorian.

The ſingularity of this account inſenſibly engaged my attention.

"Did ſhe never ſpeak to thoſe who met her?" ſaid I.

"Not ſhe. The ſpecimens indeed which ſhe gave nightly of her talents for converſation, were by no means inviting. Sometimes the caſtle rung with oaths and execrations: a moment after ſhe repeated her paternoſter: now ſhe howled out the moſt horrible blaſphemies, and then chaunted De profundis as orderly as if ſtill in the choir. In ſhort, ſhe ſeemed a mighty capricious being: but whether ſhe prayed

prayed or curſed, whether ſhe was impious or devout, ſhe always contrived to terrify her auditors out of their ſenſes. The caſtle became ſcarcely habitable; and its lord was ſo frightened by theſe midnight revels, that one fine morning he was found dead in his bed. This ſucceſs ſeemed to pleaſe the nun mightily, for now ſhe made more noiſe than ever. But the next baron proved too cunning for her. He made his appearance with a celebrated exorciſer in his hand, who feared not to ſhut himſelf up for a night in the haunted chamber. There it ſeems that he had a hard battle with the ghoſt before ſhe would promiſe to be quiet. She was obſtinate, but he was more ſo; and at length ſhe conſented to let the inhabitants of the caſtle take a good night's reſt. For ſome time after no news was heard of her. But at the end of five years the exorciſer died, and then the nun ventured to peep abroad again. However, ſhe was now grown much more tractable and well-behaved. She walked about in ſilence, and never made her appearance above once in five years. This cuſtom, if you will believe the baron, ſhe ſtill continues. He is fully perſuaded, that on the fifth of May of every fifth year, as ſoon as the clock ſtrikes one, the door of the haunted chamber opens. [Obſerve, that this room has been ſhut up for near a century.] Then out walks the ghoſtly nun with her lamp and dagger: ſhe deſcends the ſtair-caſe of the eaſtern tower, and croſſes the great hall. On that night the porter always leaves the gates of the caſtle open, out of reſpect to the apparition: not that this is thought by any means neceſſary, ſince ſhe could eaſily whip through the key-

key-hole if ſhe choſe it; but merely out of politeneſs, and to prevent her from making her exit in a way ſo derogatory to the dignity of her ghoſtſhip."

"And whither does ſhe go on quitting the caſtle?"

"To heaven, I hope; but if ſhe does, the place certainly is not to her taſte, for ſhe always returns after an hour's abſence. The lady then retires to her chamber, and is quiet for another five years."

"And you believe this, Agnes?"

"How can you aſk ſuch a queſtion? No, no, Alphonſo! I have too much reaſon to lament ſuperſtition's influence to be its victim myſelf. However I muſt not avow my credulity to the baroneſs: ſhe entertains not a doubt of the truth of this hiſtory. As to dame Cunegonda, my governeſs, ſhe proteſts that fifteen years ago ſhe ſaw the ſpectre with her own eyes. She related to me one evening, how ſhe and ſeveral other domeſtics had been terrified while at ſupper by the appearance of the bleeding nun, as the ghoſt is called in the caſtle: 'tis from her account that I drew this ſketch, and you may be certain that Cunegonda was not omitted. There ſhe is! I ſhall never forget what a paſſion ſhe was in, and how ugly ſhe looked while ſhe ſcolded me for having made her picture ſo like herſelf!"

Here ſhe pointed to a burleſque figure of an old woman in an attitude of terror.

In ſpite of the melancholy which oppreſſed me, I could not help ſmiling at the playful imagination of Agnes: ſhe had perfectly preſerved dame Cunegonda's reſemblance, but had ſo much exaggerated every fault, and rendered eve-

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ry feature so irresistibly laughable, that I could easily conceive the duenna's anger.

"The figure is admirable, my dear Agnes! I knew not that you possessed such talents for the ridiculous."

"Stay a moment," she replied; "I will shew you a figure still more ridiculous than dame Cunegonda's. If it pleases you, you may dispose of it as seems best to yourself."

She rose, and went to a cabinet at some little distance: unlocking a drawer, she took out a small case, which she opened and presented to me.

"Do you know the resemblance?" said she smiling.

It was her own.

Transported at the gift, I pressed the portrait to my lips with passion: I threw myself at her feet, and declared my gratitude in the warmest and most affectionate terms. She listened to me with complaisance, and assured me that she shared my sentiments; when suddenly she uttered a loud shriek, disengaged the hand which I held, and flew from the room by a door which opened to the garden. Amazed at this abrupt departure, I rose hastily from my knees. I beheld with confusion the baroness standing near me glowing with jealousy, and almost choaked with rage. On recovering from her swoon she had tortured her imagination to discover her concealed rival. No one appeared to deserve her suspicions more than Agnes. She immediately hastened to find her niece, tax her with encouraging my addresses, and assure herself whether her conjectures were well-grounded. Unfortunately she had already seen enough

enough to need no other confirmation. She arrived at the door of the room, at the preciſe moment when Agnes gave me her portrait. She heard me profeſs an everlaſting attachment to her rival, and ſaw me kneeling at her feet. She advanced to ſeparate us; we were too much occupied by each other to perceive her approach, and were not aware of it till Agnes beheld her ſtanding by my ſide.

Rage on the part of Donna Rodolpha, embarraſſment on mine, for ſome time kept us both ſilent. The lady recovered herſelf firſt.

"My ſuſpicions then were juſt," ſaid ſhe; "the coquetry of my niece has triumphed, and 'tis to her that I am ſacrificed. In one reſpect, however, I am fortunate; I ſhall not be the only one who laments a diſappointed paſſion. You, too, ſhall know what it is to love without hope! I daily expect orders for reſtoring Agnes to her parents. Immediately upon her arrival in Spain, ſhe will take the veil and place an inſuperable barrier to your union. You may ſpare your ſupplications." She continued perceiving me on the point of ſpeaking: "My reſolution is fixed and immoveable. Your miſtreſs ſhall remain a cloſe priſoner in her chamber, till ſhe exchanges this caſtle for the cloiſter. Solitude will perhaps recall her to a ſenſe of her duty: but to prevent your oppoſing that wiſhed event, I muſt inform you Don Alphonſo, that your preſence here is no longer agreeable either to the baron or myſelf. It was not to talk nonſenſe to my niece, that your relations ſent you to Germany: your buſineſs was to travel, and I ſhould be

be ſorry to impede any longer ſo excellent a deſign. Farewell, Segnor; remember, that to-morrow morning we meet for the laſt time."

Having ſaid this, ſhe darted upon me a look of pride, contempt, and malice, and quitted the apartment. I alſo retired to mine, and conſumed the night in planning the means of reſcuing Agnes from the power of her tyrannical aunt.

After the poſitive declaration of its miſtreſs, it was impoſſible for me to make a longer ſtay at the caſtle of Lindenberg. Accordingly, I the next day announced my immediate departure. The baron declared that it gave him ſincere pain; and he expreſſed himſelf in my favour ſo warmly, that I endeavoured to win him over to my intereſt. Scarcely had I mentioned the name of Agnes when he ſtopped me ſhort, and ſaid, that it was totally out of his power to interfere in the buſineſs. I ſaw that it was in vain to argue; the baroneſs governed her huſband with deſpotic ſway, and I eaſily perceived that ſhe had prejudiced him againſt the match. Agnes did not appear. I entreated permiſſion to take leave of her, but my prayer was rejected. I was obliged to depart without ſeeing her.

At quitting him, the baron ſhook my hand affectionately, and aſſured me that, as ſoon as his niece was gone, I might conſider his houſe as my own.

"Farewell, Don Alphonſo!" ſaid the baroneſs, and ſtretched out her hand to me.

I took it, and offered to carry it to my lips.

She

She prevented me. Her husband was at the other end of the room, and out of hearing.

"Take care of yourself," she continued; "my love is become hatred, and my wounded pride shall not be unatoned. Go where you will, my vengeance shall follow you!"

She accompanied these words with a look sufficient to make me tremble. I answered not, but hastened to quit the castle.

As my chaise drove out of the court, I looked up to the windows of your sister's chamber: nobody was to be seen there. I threw myself back despondent in my carriage. I was attended by no other servants than a Frenchman, whom I had hired at Strasbourg in Stephano's room, and my little page whom I before mentioned to you. The fidelity, intelligence, and good temper of Theodore had already made him dear to me; but he now prepared to lay an obligation on me, which made me look upon him as a guardian genius. Scarcely had we proceeded half a mile from the castle, when he rode up to the chaise door.

"Take courage, Segnor!" said he in Spanish, which he had already learnt to speak with fluency and correctness: "While you were with the baron, I watched the moment when dame Cunegonda was below stairs, and mounted into the chamber over that of donna Agnes. I sang, as loud as I could, a little German air, well known to her, hoping that she would recollect my voice. I was not disappointed, for I soon heard her window open. I hastened to let down a string with which I had provided myself. Upon hearing the casement closed again,

again, I drew up the ſtring, and, faſtened to it, I found this ſcrap of paper."

He then preſented me with a ſmall note, addreſſed to me. I opened it with impatience. It contained the following words, written in pencil:

"Conceal yourſelf for the next fortnight in "ſome neighbouring village. My aunt will "believe you to have quitted Lindenberg, and "I ſhall be reſtored to liberty. I will be in the "weſt pavilion at twelve on the night of the "thirtieth. Fail not to be there, and we ſhall "have an opportunity of concerting our future "plans. Adieu.

"AGNES."

At peruſing theſe lines my tranſports exceeded all bounds; neither did I ſet any to the expreſſions of gratitude which I heaped upon Theodore. In fact, his addreſs and attention merited my warmeſt praiſe. You will readily believe that I had not entruſted him with my paſſion for Agnes; but the arch youth had too much diſcernment not to diſcover my ſecret, and too much diſcretion not to conceal his knowledge of it. He obſerved in ſilence what was going on, nor ſtrove to make himſelf an agent in the buſineſs till my intereſts required his interference. I equally admired his judgment, his penetration, his addreſs, and his fidelity. This was not the firſt occaſion in which I had found him of infinite uſe, and I was every day more convinced of his quickneſs and capacity. During my ſhort ſtay at Straſbourg, he had applied himſelf diligently to learning the

rudiments of Spaniſh. He continued to ſtudy it, and with ſo much ſucceſs, that he ſpoke it with the ſame facility as his native language. He paſſed the greateſt part of his time in reading. He had acquired much information for his age; and united the advantages of a lively countenance and prepoſſeſſing figure to an excellent underſtanding and the very beſt of hearts. He is now fifteen. He is ſtill in my ſervice; and, when you ſee him, I am ſure that he will pleaſe you. But excuſe this digreſſion; I return to the ſubject which I quitted.

I obeyed the inſtructions of Agnes. I proceeded to Munich: there I left my chaiſe under the care of Lucas, my French ſervant, and then returned on horſeback to a ſmall village about four miles diſtant from the caſtle of Lindenberg. Upon arriving there, a ſtory was related to the hoſt at whoſe inn I alighted, which prevented his wondering at my making ſo long a ſtay in his houſe. The old man, fortunately, was credulous and incurious: he believed all I ſaid, and ſought to know no more than what I thought proper to tell him. Nobody was with me but Theodore: both were diſguiſed; and as we kept ourſelves cloſe, we were not ſuſpected to be other than what we ſeemed. In this manner the fortnight paſſed away. During that time I had the pleaſing conviction that Agnes was once more at liberty. She paſſed through the village with dame Cunegonda: ſhe ſeemed in good health and ſpirits, and talked to her companion without any appearance of conſtraint.

"Who are thoſe ladies!" ſaid I to my hoſt as the carriage paſſed.

"Baron

"Baron Lindenberg's niece, with her governeſs," he replied: "ſhe goes regularly every Friday to the convent of St. Catharine, in which ſhe was brought up, and which is ſituated about a mile from hence."

You may be certain that I waited with impatience for the enſuing Friday. I again beheld my lovely miſtreſs. She caſt her eyes upon me as ſhe paſſed the inn door. A bluſh which overſpread her cheek, told me that, in ſpite of my diſguiſe, I had been recogniſed. I bowed profoundly. She returned the compliment by a ſlight inclination of the head, as if made to one inferior, and looked another way till the carriage was out of ſight.

The long expected, long wiſhed-for night arrived. It was calm, and the moon was at the full. As ſoon as the clock ſtruck eleven I haſtened to my appointment, determined not to be too late. Theodore had provided a ladder; I aſcended the garden wall without difficulty. The page followed me, and drew the ladder after us. I poſted myſelf in the weſt pavilion, and waited impatiently for the approach of Agnes. Every breeze that whiſpered, every leaf that fell, I believed to be her foot-ſtep, and haſtened to meet her. Thus was I obliged to paſs a full hour, every minute of which appeared to me an age. The caſtle bell at length tolled twelve, and ſcarcely could I believe the night to be farther advanced. Another quarter of an hour elapſed, and I heard the light foot of my miſtreſs approaching the pavillion with precaution. I flew to receive her, and conducted her to a ſeat. I threw myſelf at her feet, and was expreſſing

my joy at ſeeing her, when ſhe thus interrupted me:

"We have no time to loſe, Alphonſo: the moments are precious; for, though no more a priſoner, Cunegonda watches my every ſtep. An expreſs is arrived from my father; I muſt depart immediately for Madrid, and 'tis with difficulty that I have obtained a week's delay. The ſuperſtition of my parents, ſupported by the repreſentations of my cruel aunt, leaves me no hope of ſoftening them to compaſſion. In this dilemma, I have reſolved to commit myſelf to your honour. God grant that you may never give me cauſe to repent my reſolution! Flight is my only reſource from the horrors of a convent; and my imprudence muſt be excuſed by the urgency of the danger. Now liſten to the plan by which I hope to effect my eſcape.

"We are now at the thirtieth of April. On the fifth day from this the viſionary nun is expected to appear. In my laſt viſit to the convent I provided myſelf with a dreſs proper for the character. A friend whom I have left there, and to whom I made no ſcruple to confide my ſecret, readily conſented to ſupply me with a religious habit. Provide a carriage, and be with it at a little diſtance from the great gate of the caſtle. As ſoon as the clock ſtrikes "one," I ſhall quit my chamber, dreſſed in the ſame apparel as the ghoſt is ſuppoſed to wear. Whoever meets me will be too much terrified to oppoſe my eſcape: I ſhall eaſily reach the door, and throw myſelf under your protection. Thus far ſucceſs is certain: but, oh! Alphonſo, ſhould you deceive me! Should you

you deſpiſe my imprudence, and reward it with ingratitude, the world will not hold a being more wretched than myſelf! I feel all the dangers to which I ſhall be expoſed. I feel that I am giving you a right to treat me with levity: but I rely upon your love, upon your honour! The ſtep which I am on the point of taking will incenſe my relations againſt me. Should you deſert me; ſhould you betray the truſt repoſed in you, I ſhall have no friend to puniſh your inſult, or ſupport my cauſe. On yourſelf alone reſts all my hope; and if your own heart does not plead in my behalf, I am undone for ever!"

The tone in which ſhe pronounced theſe words was ſo touching that, in ſpite of my joy at receiving her promiſe to follow me, I could not help being affected. I alſo repined in ſecret at not having taken the precaution to provide a carriage at the village; in which caſe, I might have carried off Agnes that very night. Such an attempt was now impracticable; neither carriage nor horſes were to be procured nearer than Munich, which was diſtant from Lindenberg two good days journey. I was therefore obliged to chime in with her plan, which in truth, ſeemed well arranged. Her diſguiſe would ſecure her from being ſtopped in quitting the caſtle, and would enable her to ſtep into the carriage at the very gate, without difficulty or loſing time.

Agnes reclined her head mournfully upon my ſhoulder, and, by the light of the moon, I ſaw tears flowing down her cheek. I ſtrove to diſſipate her melancholy, and encouraged her to look forward to the proſpect of happi-

neſs. I proteſted in the moſt ſolemn terms that her virtue and innocence would be ſafe in my keeping; and that, till the church had made her my lawful wife, her honour ſhould be held by me as ſacred as a ſiſter's. I told her, that my firſt care ſhould be to find you out, Lorenzo, and reconcile you to our union; and I was continuing to ſpeak in the ſame ſtrain, when a noiſe without alarmed me. Suddenly the door of the pavilion was thrown open, and Cunegonda ſtood before us. She had heard Agnes ſteal out of her chamber, followed her into the garden, and perceived her entering the pavilion. Favoured by the trees which ſhaded it, and unperceived by Theodore, who waited at a little diſtance, ſhe had approached in ſilence, and overheard our whole converſation.

"Admirable!" cried Cunegonda, in a voice ſhrill with paſſion, while Agnes uttered a loud ſhriek. "By St. Barbara, young lady, you have an excellent invention! You muſt perſonate the bleeding nun, truly? What impiety! What incredulity! Marry, I have a good mind to let you purſue your plan. When the real ghoſt met you, I warrant you would be in a pretty condition! Don Alphonſo, you ought to be aſhamed of yourſelf for ſeducing a young, ignorant creature to leave her family and friends. However, for this time, at leaſt, I ſhall mar your wicked deſigns. The noble lady ſhall be informed of the whole affair, and Agnes muſt defer playing the ſpectre till a better opportunity. Farewell, Segnor.—Donna Agnes, let me have the honour of conducting your ghoſtſhip back to your apartment."

She

She approached the ſopha on which her trembling pupil was ſeated, took her by the hand, and prepared to lead her from the pavillion.

I detained her, and ſtrove by entreaties, ſoothing, promiſes, and flattery to win her to my party; but, finding all that I could ſay of no avail, I abandoned the vain attempt.

"Your obſtinacy muſt be its own puniſhment," ſaid I; "but one reſource remains to ſave Agnes and myſelf, and I ſhall not heſitate to employ it."

Terrified at this menace, ſhe again endeavoured to quit the pavilion; but I ſeized her by the wriſt, and detained her forcibly. At the ſame moment Theodore, who had followed her into the room, cloſed the door, and prevented her eſcape. I took the veil of Agnes; I threw it round the duenna's head, who uttered ſuch piercing ſhrieks that, in ſpite of our diſtance from the caſtle, I dreaded their being heard. At length I ſucceeded in gagging her ſo completely, that ſhe could not produce a ſingle ſound. Theodore and myſelf, with ſome difficulty, next contrived to bind her hands and feet with our handkerchiefs; and I adviſed Agnes to regain her chamber with all diligence. I promiſed that no harm ſhould happen to Cunegonda; bade her remember that, on the fifth of May, I ſhould be in waiting at the great gate of the caſtle, and took of her an affectionate farewell. Trembling and uneaſy, ſhe had ſcarce power enough to ſignify her conſent to my plans, and fled back to her apartment in diſorder and confuſion.

In the mean while Theodore aſſiſted me in carrying off my antiquated prize. She was hoiſted over the wall, placed before me upon my horſe like a portmanteau, and I galloped away with her from the caſtle of Lindenberg. The unlucky duenna never had made a more diſagreeable journey in her life. She was jolted and ſhaken till ſhe was become little more than an animated mummy; not to mention her fright, when we waded through a ſmall river, through which it was neceſſary to paſs in order to regain the village. Before we reached the inn, I had already determined how to diſpoſe of the troubleſome Cunegonda. We entered the ſtreet in which the inn ſtood; and while the page knocked I waited at a little diſtance. The landlord opened the door with a lamp in his hand.

"Give me the light," ſaid Theodore, my maſter is coming."

He ſnatched the lamp haſtily, and purpoſely let it fall upon the ground. The landlord returned to the kitchen to re-light the lamp, leaving the door open. I profited by the obſcurity, ſprang from my horſe with Cunegonda in my arms, darted up ſtairs, reached my chamber unperceived, and unlocking the door of a ſpacious cloſet, ſtowed her within it, and then turned the key. The landlord and Theodore ſoon after appeared with lights: the former expreſſed himſelf ſurpriſed at my returning ſo late, but aſked no impertinent queſtions. He ſoon quitted the room, and left me to exult in the ſucceſs of my undertaking.

I immediately paid a viſit to my priſoner. I ſtrove to perſuade her ſubmitting with patience

to

to her temporary confinement. My attempt was unſucceſsful. Unable to ſpeak or move, ſhe expreſſed her fury by her looks; and, except at meals, I never dared to unbind her, or releaſe her from the gag. At ſuch times I ſtood over her with a drawn ſword, and proteſted that, if ſhe uttered a ſingle cry, I would plunge it in her boſom. As ſoon as ſhe had done eating the gag was replaced. I was conſcious that this proceeding was cruel, and could only be juſtified by the urgency of circumſtances. As to Theodore, he had no ſcruples upon the ſubject. Cunegonda's captivity entertained him beyond meaſure. During his abode in the caſtle, a continual warfare had been carried on between him and the duenna; and, now that he found his enemy ſo abſolutely in his power, he triumphed without mercy: he ſeemed to think of nothing but how to find out new means of plaguing her. Sometimes he affected to pity her misfortune, then laughed at, abuſed, and mimicked her: he played her a thouſand tricks, each more provoking than the other; and amuſed himſelf by telling her that her elopement muſt have occaſioned much ſurpriſe at the baron's. This was in fact the caſe. No one, except Agnes, could imagine what was become of dame Cunegonda. Every hole and corner was ſearched for her; the ponds were dragged, and the woods underwent a thorough examination. Still no dame Cunegonda made her appearance. Agnes kept the ſecret, and I kept the duenna: the baroneſs, therefore remained in total ignorance reſpecting the old woman's fate, but ſuſpected her to have periſhed by ſuicide. Thus

paſſed away five days, during which I had prepared every thing neceſſary for my enterpriſe. On quitting Agnes, I had made it my firſt buſineſs to diſpatch a peaſant with a letter to Lucas, at Munich, ordering him to take care that a coach and four ſhould arrive about ten o'clock on the fifth of May at the village of Roſenwald. He obeyed my inſtructions punctually; the equipage arrived at the time appointed. As the period of her lady's elopement drew nearer, Cunegonda's rage increaſed. I verily believe that ſpite and paſſion would have killed her, had I not luckily diſcovered her prepoſſeſſion in favour of cherry-brandy. With this favourite liquor ſhe was plentifully ſupplied, and, Theodore always remaining to guard her, the gag was occaſionally removed. The liquor ſeemed to have a wonderful effect in ſoftening the acrimony of her nature; and her confinement not admitting of any other amuſement, ſhe got drunk regularly once a-day, juſt by way of paſſing the time.

The fifth of May arrived, a period by me never to be forgoten! Before the clock ſtruck twelve, I betook myſelf to the ſcene of action. Theodore followed me on horſeback. I concealed the carriage in a ſpacious cavern of the hill on whoſe brow the caſtle was ſituated. This cavern was of conſiderable depth, and, among the peaſants was known by the name of Lindenberg Hole. The night was calm and beautiful: the moon-beams fell upon the antient towers of the caſtle, and ſhed upon their ſummits a ſilver light. All was ſtill around me: nothing was to be heard except the night-breeze ſighing among the leaves, the diſtant barking

barking of village dogs, or the owl who had eſtabliſhed herſelf in a nook of the deſerted eaſtern turret. I heard her melancholy ſhriek, and looked upwards: ſhe ſat upon the ridge of a window which I recogniſed to be that of the haunted room. This brought to my remembrance the ſtory of the bleeding nun, and I ſighed while I reflected on the influence of ſuperſtition, and weakneſs of human reaſon. Suddenly I heard a faint chorus ſteal upon the ſilence of the night.

"What can occaſion that noiſe, Theodore?"

"A ſtranger of diſtinction," replied he, "paſſed through the village to-day in his way to the caſtle: He is reported to be the father of Donna Agnes. Doubtleſs the baron has given an entertainment to celebrate his arrival."

The caſtle bell announced the hour of midnight. This was the uſual ſignal for the family to retire to bed. Soon after I perceived lights in the caſtle, moving backwards and forwards in different directions. I conjectured the company to be ſeparating. I could hear the heavy doors grate as they opened with difficulty; and as they cloſed again, the rotten caſements rattled in their frames. The chamber of Agnes was on the other ſide of the caſtle. I trembled leſt ſhe ſhould have failed in obtaining the key of the haunted room. Through this it was neceſſary for her to paſs, in order to reach the narrow ſtair-caſe by which the ghoſt was ſuppoſed to deſcend into the great hall. Agitated by this apprehenſion, I kept my eyes conſtantly fixed upon the window, where

where I hoped to perceive the friendly glare of a lamp borne by Agnes. I now heard the maſſy gates unbarred. By the candle in his hand, I diſtinguiſhed old Conrad, the porter. He ſet the portal doors wide open, and retired. The lights in the caſtle gradually diſappeared, and at length the whole building was wrapt in darkneſs.

While I ſat upon a broken ridge of the hill, the ſtillneſs of the ſcene inſpired me with melancholy ideas not altogether unpleaſing. The caſtle, which ſtood full in my ſight, formed an object equally awful and pictureſque. Its ponderous walls, tinged by the moon with ſolemn brightneſs; its old and partly ruined towers, liſting themſelves into the clouds, and ſeeming to frown on the plains around them; its lofty battlements, overgrown with ivy; and folding gates, expanding in honour of the viſionary inhabitant, made me ſenſible of a ſad and reverential horror. Yet did not theſe ſenſations occupy me ſo fully as to prevent me from witneſſing with impatience the ſlow progreſs of time. I approached the caſtle, and ventured to walk round it. A few rays of light ſtill glimmered in the chamber of Agnes. I obſerved them with joy. I was ſtill gazing upon them, when I perceived a figure draw near the window, and the curtain was carefully cloſed to conceal the lamp which burned there. Convinced by this obſervation that Agnes had not abandoned our plan, I returned with a light heart to my former ſtation.

The half-hour ſtruck! The three-quarters ſtruck! My boſom beat high with hope and expectation. At length, the wiſhed for ſound

was

was heard. The bell tolled "one," and the manſion echoed with the noiſe loud and ſolemn. I looked up to the caſement of the haunted chamber. Scarcely had five minutes elapſed when the expected light appeared. I was now cloſe to the tower. The window was not ſo far from the ground, but that I fancied I perceived a female figure with a lamp in her hand moving ſlowly along the apartment. The light ſoon faded away, and all was again dark and gloomy.

Occaſional gleams of brightneſs darted from the ſtair-caſe windows as the lovely ghoſt paſſed by them. I traced the light through the hall: it reached the portal, and at length I beheld Agnes paſs through the folding gates. She was habited exactly as ſhe had deſcribed the ſpectre. A chaplet of beads hung upon her arm; her head was enveloped in a long white veil; her nun's dreſs was ſtained with blood; and ſhe had taken care to provide herſelf with a lamp and dagger. She advanced towards the ſpot where I ſtood. I flew to meet her, and claſped her in my arms.

"Agnes!" ſaid I, while I preſſed her to my boſom,

"Agnes! Agnes! thou art mine!
"Agnes! Agnes! I am thine!
"In my veins while blood ſhall roll,
"Thou art mine!
"I am thine!
"Thine my body! thine my ſoul!"

Terrified and breathleſs, ſhe was unable to ſpeak. She dropped her lamp and dagger, and ſunk upon my boſom in ſilence. I raiſed her

her in my arms, and conveyed her to the carriage. Theodore remained behind in order to releaſe dame Cunegonda. I alſo charged him with a letter to the baroneſs, explaining the whole affair, and entreating her good offices in reconciling Don Gaſton to my union with his daughter. I diſcovered to her my real name. I proved to her that my birth and expectations juſtified my pretending to her niece; and aſſured her, though it was out of my power to return her love, that I would ſtrive unceaſingly to obtain her eſteem and friendſhip.

I ſtepped into the carriage, where Agnes was already ſeated. Theodore cloſed the door, and the poſtillions drove away. At firſt I was delighted with the rapidity of our progreſs; but as ſoon as we were in no danger of purſuit, I called to the drivers, and bade them moderate their pace. They ſtrove in vain to obey me; the horſes refuſed to anſwer the rein, and continued to ruſh on with aſtoniſhing ſwiftneſs. The poſtillions redoubled their efforts to ſtop them; but, by kicking and plunging, the beaſts ſoon releaſed themſelves from this reſtraint. Uttering a loud ſhriek, the drivers were hurled upon the ground. Immediately thick clouds obſcured the ſky: the winds howled around us, the lightning flaſhed, and the thunder roared tremendouſly. Never did I behold ſo frightful a tempeſt! Terrified by the jar of contending elements, the horſes ſeemed every moment to increaſe their ſpeed. Nothing could interrupt their career; they dragged the carriage through hedges and ditches, daſhed down the moſt dangerous precipices, and ſeemed to vie in ſwiftneſs with the rapidity of the winds.

All

All this while my companion lay motionleſs in my arms. Truly alarmed by the magnitude of the danger, I was in vain attempting to recall her to her ſenſes, when a loud craſh announced that a ſtop was put to our progreſs in the moſt diſagreeable manner. The carriage was ſhattered to pieces. In falling, I ſtruck my temple againſt a flint. The pain of the wound, the violence of the ſhock, and apprehenſion for the ſafety of Agnes, combined to overpower me ſo completely, that my ſenſes forſook me, and I lay without animation on the ground.

I probably remained for ſome time in this ſituation, ſince, when I opened my eyes, it was broad-day light. Several peaſants were ſtanding round me, and ſeemed diſputing whether my recovery was poſſible. I ſpoke German tolerably well. As ſoon as I could utter an articulate ſound, I enquired after Agnes. What was my ſurpriſe and diſtreſs, when aſſured by the peaſants that nobody had been ſeen anſwering the deſcription which I gave of her! They told me, that in going to their daily labour they had been alarmed by obſerving the fragments of my carriage, and by hearing the groans of an horſe, the only one of the four which remained alive: the other three lay dead by my ſide. Nobody was near me when they came up, and much time had been loſt before they ſucceeded in recovering me. Uneaſy beyond expreſſion reſpecting the fate of my companion, I beſought the peaſants to diſperſe themſelves in ſearch of her. I deſcribed her dreſs and promiſed immenſe rewards to whoever brought me any intelligence.

gence. As for myſelf, it was impoſſible for me to join in the purſuit: I had broken two of my ribs in the fall; my arm being diſlocated hung uſeleſs by my ſide; and my left leg was ſhattered ſo terribly, that I never expected to recover its uſe.

The peaſants complied with my requeſt; all left me except four, who made a litter of boughs, and prepared to convey me to the neighbouring town. I enquired its name: it proved to be Ratiſbon, and I could ſcarcely perſuade myſelf that I had travelled to ſuch a diſtance in a ſingle night. I told the countrymen, that at one o'clock that morning I had paſſed through the village of Roſenwald. They ſhook their heads wiſtfully, and made ſigns to each other that I muſt certainly be delirious. I was conveyed to a decent inn, and immediately put to bed. A phyſician was ſent for, who ſet my arm with ſucceſs: he then examined my other hurts, and told me that I need be under no apprehenſion of the conſequences of any of them, but ordered me to keep myſelf quiet, and be prepared for a tedious and painful cure. I anſwered him, that if he hoped to keep me quiet, he muſt firſt endeavour to procure me ſome news of a lady who had quitted Roſenwald in my company the night before, and had been with me at the moment when the coach broke down. He ſmiled, and only replied by adviſing me to make myſelf eaſy, for that all proper care ſhould be taken of me. As he quitted me, the hoſteſs met him at the door of the room.

"The gentleman is not quite in his right ſenſes," I heard him ſay to her in a low voice; "'tis

"'tis the natural conſequences of his fall, but that will ſoon be over."

One after another the peaſants returned to the inn, and informed me that no traces had been diſcovered of my unfortunate miſtreſs. Uneaſineſs now became deſpair. I entreated them to renew their ſearch in the moſt urgent terms, doubling the promiſes which I had already made them. My wild and frantic manner confirmed the by-ſtanders in the idea of my being delirious. No ſigns of the lady having appeared, they believed her to be a creature fabricated by my over heated brain, and paid no attention to my entreaties. However, the hoſteſs aſſured me, that a freſh enquiry ſhould be made; but I found afterwards that her promiſe was only given to quiet me. No further ſteps were taken in the buſineſs.

Though my baggage was left at Munich under the care of my French ſervant, having prepared myſelf for a long journey, my purſe was amply furniſhed: beſides, my equipage proved me to be of diſtinction, and in conſequence all poſſible attention was paid me at the inn. The day paſſed away: ſtill no news arrived of Agnes. The anxiety of fear now gave place to deſpondency. I ceaſed to rave about her, and was plunged in the depth of melancholy reflections. Perceiving me to be ſilent and tranquil, my attendants believed my delirium to have abated, and that my malady had taken a favourable turn. According to the phyſician's order, I ſwallowed a compoſing medicine; and as ſoon as the night ſhut in, my attendants withdrew, and left me to repoſe.

That

That repoſe I wooed in vain. The agitation of my boſom chaſed away ſleep. Reſtleſs in my mind, in ſpite of the fatigue of my body, I continued to toſs about from ſide to ſide, till the clock in a neighbouring ſteeple ſtruck "one." As I liſtened to the mournful hollow ſound, and heard it die away in the wind, I felt a ſudden chillneſs ſpread itſelf over my body. I ſhuddered without knowing wherefore; cold dews poured down my forehead, and my hair ſtood briſtling with alarm. Suddenly I heard ſlow and heavy ſteps aſcending the ſtair-caſe. By an involuntary movement I ſtarted up in my bed, and drew back the curtain. A ſingle ruſh-light, which glimmered upon the hearth, ſhed a faint gleam through the apartment, which was hung with tapeſtry. The door was thrown open with violence. A figure entered, and drew near my bed with ſolemn meaſured ſteps. With trembling apprehenſion I examined this midnight viſitor. God Almighty! it was the bleeding nun! It was my loſt companion! Her face was ſtill veiled, but ſhe no longer held her lamp and dagger. She lifted up her veil ſlowly. What a ſight preſented itſelf to my ſtartled eyes! I beheld before me an animated corpſe. Her countenance was long and haggard; her cheeks and lips were bloodleſs; the paleneſs of death was ſpread over her features; and her eye-balls fixed ſteadfaſtly upon me, were luſtreleſs and hollow.

I gazed upon the ſpectre with horror too great to be deſcribed. My blood was frozen in my veins. I would have called for aid, but the ſound expired ere it could paſs my lips.

My

My nerves were bound up in impotence, and I remained in the ſame attitude inanimate as a ſtatue.

The viſionary nun looked upon me for ſome minutes in ſilence: there was ſomething petrifying in her regard. At length, in a low ſepulchral voice, ſhe pronounced the following words:

"Raymond! Raymond! Thou art mine!
"Raymond! Raymond! I am thine!
"In thy veins while blood ſhall roll,
"I am thine!
"Thou art mine!
"Mine thy body! Mine thy ſoul!"——

Breathleſs with fear, I liſtened while ſhe repeated my own expreſſions. The apparition ſeated herſelf oppoſite to me at the foot of the bed, and was ſilent. Her eyes were fixed earneſtly upon mine: they ſeemed endowed with the property of the rattle-ſnakes, for I ſtrove in vain to look off her. My eyes were faſcinated, and I had not the power of withdrawing them from the ſpectre's.

In this attitude ſhe remained for a whole long hour without ſpeaking or moving; nor was I able to do either. At length the clock ſtruck two. The apparition roſe from her ſeat, and approached the ſide of the bed. She graſped with her icy fingers my hand, which hung lifeleſs upon the coverture, and, preſſing her cold lips to mine, again repeated,

"Raymond! Raymond! Thou art mine!
"Raymond! Raymond! I am thine!" &c.

She then dropped my hand, quitted the chamber with ſlow ſteps, and the door cloſed after

after her. Till that moment the faculties of my body had been all ſuſpended; thoſe of my mind had alone been waking. The charm now ceaſed to operate; the blood which had been frozen in my veins ruſhed back to my heart with violence; I uttered a deep groan, and ſunk lifeleſs on my pillow.

The adjoining room was only ſeparated from mine by a thin partition; it was occupied by the hoſt and his wife: the former was rouſed by my groan, and immediately haſtened to my chamber; the hoſteſs ſoon followed him. With ſome difficulty they ſucceeded in reſtoring me to my ſenſes, and immediately ſent for the phyſician, who arrived in all diligence. He declared my fever to be very much increaſed, and that, if I continued to ſuffer ſuch violent agitation, he would not take upon him to enſure my life. Some medicines which he gave me, in ſome degree tranquilized my ſpirits, I fell into a ſort of ſlumber towards day-break, but fearful dreams prevented me from deriving any benefit from my repoſe. Agnes and the bleeding nun preſented themſelves by turns to my fancy, and combined to harraſs and torment me. I awoke fatigued and unrefreſhed. My fever ſeemed rather augmented than diminiſhed; the agitation of my mind impeded my fractured bones from knitting: I had frequent fainting fits, and during the whole day the phyſician judged it expedient not to quit me for two hours together.

The ſingularity of my adventure made me determine to conceal it from every one, ſince I could not expect that a circumſtance ſo ſtrange ſhould gain credit. I was very uneaſy about

about Agnes. I knew not what ſhe would think at not finding me at the rendezvous, and dreaded her entertaining ſuſpicions of my fidelity. However I depended upon Theodore's diſcretion, and truſted that my letter to the baroneſs would convince her of the rectitude of my intentions. Theſe conſiderations ſomewhat lightened my inquietude upon her account; but the impreſſion left upon my mind by my nocturnal viſitor, grew ſtronger with every ſucceeding moment. The night drew near; I dreaded its arrival; yet I ſtrove to perſuade myſelf that the ghoſt would appear no more, and at all events I deſired that a ſervant might ſit up in my chamber.

The fatigue of my body, from not having ſlept on the former night, co-operating with the ſtrong opiates adminiſtered to me in profuſion, at length procured me that repoſe of which I was ſo much in need. I ſunk into a profound and tranquil ſlumber, and had already ſlept for ſome hours, when the neighbouring clock roufed me by ſtriking "one." Its ſound brought with it to my memory all the horrors of the night before. The ſame cold ſhivering ſeized me. I ſtarted up in my bed, and perceived the ſervant faſt aſleep in an arm-chair near me. I called him by his name: he made no anſwer. I ſhook him forcibly by the arm, and ſtrove in vain to wake him: he was perfectly inſenſible to my efforts. I now heard the heavy ſteps aſcending the ſtair-caſe; the door was thrown open, and again the bleeding nun ſtood before me. Once more my limbs were chained in ſecond infancy: once more I heard thoſe fatal words repeated,

"Raymond!

"Raymond! Raymond! Thou art mine!
"Raymond! Raymond! I am thine!" &c.—

The ſcene which had ſhocked me ſo ſenſibly on the former night, was again preſented. The ſpectre again preſſed her lips to mine, again touched me with her rotting fingers, and, as on her firſt appearance, quitted the chamber as ſoon as the clock told "two."

Every night was this repeated. Far from growing accuſtomed to the ghoſt, every ſucceeding viſit inſpired me with greater horror. Her idea purſued me continually, and I became the prey of habitual melancholy. The conſtant agitation of my mind naturally retarded the re-eſtabliſhment of my health. Several months elapſed before I was able to quit my bed; and when, at length, I was moved to a ſopha, I was ſo faint, ſpiritleſs, and emaciated, that I could not croſs the room without aſſiſtance. The looks of my attendants ſufficiently denoted the little hope which they entertained of my recovery. The profound ſadneſs which oppreſſed me without remiſſion, made the phyſician conſider me to be an hypochondriac. The cauſe of my diſtreſs I carefully concealed in my own boſom, for I knew that no one could give me relief. The ghoſt was not even viſible to any eye but mine. I had frequently cauſed attendants to ſit up in my room; but the moment the clock ſtruck "one," irreſiſtible ſlumber ſeized them, nor left them till the departure of the ghoſt.

You may be ſurpriſed that during this time I made no enquiries after your ſiſter. Theodore, who with difficulty had diſcovered my abode,

abode, had quieted my apprehenſions for her ſafety; at the ſame time he convinced me, that all attempts to releaſe her from captivity muſt be fruitleſs, till I ſhould be in a condition to return to Spain. The particulars of her adventure, which I ſhall now relate to you, were partly communicated to me by Theodore, and partly by Agnes herſelf.

On the fatal night when her elopement was to have taken place, accident had not permitted her to quit her chamber at the appointed time. At length ſhe ventured into the haunted room, deſcended the ſtair-caſe leading into the hall, found the gates open as ſhe expected, and left the caſtle unobſerved. What was her ſurpriſe at not finding me ready to receive her! She examined the cavern, ranged through every alley of the neighbouring wood, and paſſed two full hours in this fruitleſs enquiry. She could diſcover no traces either of me or of the carriage. Alarmed and diſappointed, her only reſource was to return to the caſtle before the baroneſs miſſed her; but here ſhe found herſelf in a freſh embarraſſment. The bell had already tolled "two," the ghoſtly hour was paſt, and the careful porter had locked the folding gates. After much irreſolution, ſhe ventured to knock ſoftly. Luckily for her, Conrad was ſtill awake; he heard the noiſe, and roſe, murmuring at being called up a ſecond time, no ſooner had he opened one of the doors, and beheld the ſuppoſed apparition waiting there for admittance, than he uttered a loud cry, and ſunk upon his knees. Agnes profited by his terror: ſhe glided by him, flew to her own apartment, and having thrown

thrown off her ſpectre's trappings, retired to bed, endeavouring in vain to account for my diſappearing.

In the mean while, Theodore having ſeen my carriage drive off with the falſe Agnes, returned joyfully to the village. The next morning he releaſed Cunegonda from her confinement, and accompanied her to the caſtle. There he found the baron, his lady, and Don Gaſton diſputing together upon the porter's relation. All of them agreed in believing the exiſtence of ſpectres; but the latter contended that for a ghoſt to knock for admittance was a proceeding till then unwitneſſed, and totally incompatible with the immaterial nature of a ſpirit. They were ſtill diſcuſſing the ſubject, when the page appeared with Cunegonda, and cleared up the myſtery. On hearing his depoſition, it was agreed unanimouſly, that the Agnes whom Theodore had ſeen ſtep into my carriage muſt have been the bleeding nun, and that the ghoſt who had terrified Conrad was no other than Don Gaſton's daughter.

The firſt ſurpriſe which this diſcovery occaſioned being over, the baroneſs reſolved to make it of uſe in perſuading her niece to take the veil. Fearing leſt ſo advantageous an eſtabliſhment for his daughter ſhould induce Don Gaſton to renounce his reſolution, ſhe ſuppreſſed my letter, and continued to repreſent me as a needy unknown adventurer. A childiſh vanity had led me to conceal my real name even from my miſtreſs; I wiſhed to be loved for myſelf, not for being the ſon and heir of the marquis de las Ciſternas. The conſequence was, that my rank was known to no one in the caſtle except

cept the baroneſs, and ſhe took good care to confine the knowledge to her own breaſt. Don Gaſton having approved his ſiſter's deſign, Agnes was ſummoned to appear before them. She was taxed with having meditated an elopement, obliged to make a full confeſſion, and was amazed at the gentleneſs with which it was received: but what was her affliction, when informed that the failure of her project muſt be attributed to me! Cunegonda, tutored by the baroneſs, told her, that when I releaſed her I had deſired her to inform her lady that our connexion was at an end, that the whole affair was occaſioned by a falſe report, and that it by no means ſuited my circumſtances to marry a woman without fortune or expectations.

To this account my ſudden diſappearing gave but too great an air of probability. Theodore, who could have contradicted the ſtory, by Donna Rodolpha's order was kept out of her ſight. What proved a ſtill greater confirmation of my being an impoſtor, was the arrival of a letter from yourſelf, declaring that you had no ſort of acquaintance with Alphonſo d'Alvarada. Theſe ſeeming proofs of my perfidy, aided by the artful inſinuations of her aunt, by Cunegonda's flattery, and her father's threats and anger, entirely conquered your ſiſter's repugnance to a convent. Incenſed at my behaviour, and diſguſted with the world in general, ſhe conſented to receive the veil. She paſſed another month at the caſtle of Lindenberg, during which my non-appearance confirmed her in her reſolution, and then accompanied Don Gaſton into Spain. Theodore

was now ſet at liberty. He haſtened to Munich, where I had promiſed to let him hear from me; but finding from Lucas that I never arrived there, he purſued his ſearch with indefatigable perſeverance, and at length ſucceeded in rejoining me at Ratiſbon.

So much was I altered, that ſcarcely could he recollect my features: the diſtreſs viſible upon his, ſufficiently teſtified how lively was the intereſt which he felt for me. The ſociety of this amiable boy, whom I had always conſidered rather as a companion than a ſervant, was now my only comfort. His converſation was gay, yet ſenſible, and his obſervations ſhrewd and entertaining. He had picked up much more knowledge than is uſual at his age; but what rendered him moſt agreeable to me, was his having a delightful voice, and ſome ſkill in muſic. He had alſo acquired ſome taſte in poetry, and even ventured ſometimes to write verſes himſelf. He occaſionally compoſed little ballads in Spaniſh. His compoſitions were but indifferent, I muſt confeſs, yet they were pleaſing to me from their novelty; and hearing him ſing them to his guitar was the only amuſement which I was capable of receiving. Theodore perceived well enough that ſomething preyed upon my mind; but as I concealed the cauſe of my grief even from him, reſpect would not permit him to pry into my ſecrets.

One evening I was lying upon my ſopha, plunged in reflections very far from agreeable: Theodore amuſed himſelf by obſerving from the window a battle between two poſtillions, who were quarrelling in the inn-yard.

"Ha!

"Ha! ha!" cried he, ſuddenly, "yonder is the Great Mogul."

"Who?" ſaid I.

"Only a man who made me a ſtrange ſpeech at Munich."

"What was the purport of it?"

"Now you put me in mind of it, Segnor, it was a kind of meſſage to you, but truly it was not worth delivering. I believe the fellow to be mad, for my part. When I came to Munich in ſearch of you I found him living at "the King of the Romans," and the hoſt gave me an odd account of him. By his account he is ſuppoſed to be a foreigner, but of what country nobody can tell. He ſeemed to have no acquaintance in the town, ſpoke very ſeldom, and never was ſeen to ſmile. He had neither ſervants nor baggage; but his purſe ſeemed well furniſhed, and he did much good in the town. Some ſuppoſed him to be an Arabian aſtrologer, others to be a travelling mountebank, and many declared that he was Doctor Fauſtus, whom the devil had ſent back to Germany. The landlord, however, told me, that he had the beſt reaſons to believe him to be the Great Mogul incognito."

"But the ſtrange ſpeech, Theodore——"

"True, I had almoſt forgotten the ſpeech: indeed, for that matter, it would not have been a great loſs if I had forgotten it altogether. You are to know, Segnor, that while I was enquiring about you of the landlord, this ſtranger paſſed by. He ſtopped, and looked at me earneſtly—"Youth," ſaid he, in a ſolemn voice, "he whom you ſeek, has found that which he would fain loſe. My hand alone can dry up

the blood. Bid your maſter wiſh for me when the clock ſtrikes "one."

"How?" cried I, ſtarting from my ſopha. [The words which Theodore had repeated, ſeemed to imply the ſtranger's knowledge of my ſecret] "Fly to him, my boy! Entreat him to grant me one moment's converſation."

Theodore was ſurpriſed at the vivacity of my manner: however, he aſked no queſtions, but haſtened to obey me. I waited his return impatiently. But a ſhort ſpace of time had elapſed, when he again appeared, and uſhered the expected gueſt into my chamber. He was a man of majeſtic preſence; his countenance was ſtrongly marked, and his eyes were large, black, and ſparkling: yet there was a ſomething in his look, which, the moment that I ſaw him inſpired me with a ſecret awe, not to ſay horror. He was dreſſed plainly, his hair was unpowdered, and a band of black velvet which encircled his forehead, ſpread over his features an additional gloom. His countenance wore the marks of profound melancholy, his ſtep was ſlow, and his manner grave, ſtately, and ſolemn.

He ſaluted me with politeneſs; and having replied to the uſual compliments of introduction, he motioned to Theodore to quit the chamber. The page inſtantly withdrew.

"I know your buſineſs," ſaid he, without giving me time to ſpeak. "I have the power of releaſing you from your nightly viſitor; but this cannot be done before Sunday. On the hour when the ſabbath morning breaks, ſpirits of darkneſs have leaſt influence over mortals. After Saturday the nun ſhall viſit you no more."

"May I not enquire," ſaid I, "by what means

means you are in poſſeſſion of a ſecret, which I carefully concealed from the knowledge of every one?"

"How can I be ignorant of your diſtreſſes, when their cauſe at this moment ſtands beſide you?"

I ſtarted. The ſtranger continued.

"Though to you only viſible for one hour in the twenty-four, neither day nor night does ſhe ever quit you; nor will ſhe ever quit you till you have granted her requeſt."

"And what is that requeſt?"

"That ſhe muſt herſelf explain: it lies not in my knowledge. Wait with patience for the night of Saturday: all ſhall be then cleared up."

I dared not preſs him further. He ſoon after changed the converſation, and talked of various matters. He named people who had ceaſed to exiſt for many centuries, and yet with whom he appeared to have been perſonally acquainted. I could not mention a country however diſtant, which he had not viſited, nor could I ſufficiently admire the extent and variety of his information. I remarked to him, that having travelled, ſeen and known ſo much, muſt have given him infinite pleaſure. He ſhook his head mournfully.

"No one," he replied, "is adequate to comprehending the miſery of my lot! Fate obliges me to be conſtantly in movement; I am not permitted to paſs more than a fortnight in the ſame place. I have no friend in the world, and, from the reſtleſſneſs of my deſtiny, I never can acquire one. Fain would I lay down my miſerable life, for I envy thoſe who enjoy the quiet of the grave: but death

cludes me, and flies from my embrace. In vain do I throw myſelf in the way of danger. I plunge into the ocean; the waves throw me back with abhorrence upon the ſhore: I ruſh into fire; the flames recoil at my reproach: I oppoſe myſelf to the fury of banditti; their ſwords become blunted, and break againſt my breaſt. The hungry tiger ſhudders at my approach, and the alligator flies from a monſter more horrible than itſelf. God has ſet his ſeal upon me, and all his creatures reſpect this fatal mark."

He put his hand to the velvet, which was bound round his forehead. There was in his eyes an expreſſion of fury, deſpair, and malevolence, that ſtruck horror to my very ſoul. An involuntary convulſion made me ſhudder. The ſtranger perceived it.

"Such is the curſe impoſed on me," he continued: "I am doomed to inſpire all who look on me with terror and deteſtation. You already feel the influence of the charm, and with every ſucceeding moment will feel it more. I will not add to your ſufferings by my preſence. Farewell till Saturday. As ſoon as the clock ſtrikes twelve, expect me at your chamber-door."

Having ſaid this he departed, leaving me in aſtoniſhment at the myſterious turn of his manner and converſation. His aſſurances that I ſhould ſoon be relieved from the apparition's viſits, produced a good effect upon my conſtitution. Theodore, whom I rather treated as an adopted child than a domeſtic, was ſurpriſed at his return to obſerve the amendment in my looks. He congratulated me on this

ſymptom

ſymptom of returning health, and declared himſelf delighted at my having received ſo much benefit from my conference with the Great Mogul. Upon enquiry I found that the ſtranger had already paſſed eight days in Ratiſbon. According to his own account, therefore, he was only to remain there ſix days longer. Saturday was ſtill at the diſtance of three. Oh! with what impatience did I expect its arrival! In the interim, the bleeding nun continued her nocturnal viſits; but hoping ſoon to be releaſed from them altogether, the effects which they produced on me became leſs violent than before.

The wiſhed-for night arrived. To avoid creating ſuſpicion I retired to bed at my uſual hour. But as ſoon as my attendants had left me, I dreſſed myſelf again, and prepared for the ſtranger's reception. He entered my room upon the turn of midnight. A ſmall cheſt was in his hand, which he placed near the ſtove. He ſaluted me without ſpeaking; I returned the compliment, obſerving an equal ſilence. He then opened his cheſt. The firſt thing which he produced was a ſmall wooden crucifix: he ſunk upon his knees, gazed upon it mournfully, and caſt his eyes towards heaven. He ſeemed to be praying devoutly. At length he bowed his head reſpectfully, kiſſed the crucifix thrice, and quitted his kneeling poſture. He next drew from the cheſt a covered goblet: with the liquor which it contained, and which appeared to be blood, he ſprinkled the floor; and then dipping in it one end of the crucifix, he deſcribed a circle in the middle of the room. Round about this

he placed various reliques, ſculls, thigh-bones, &c. I obſerved that he diſpoſed them all in the forms of croſſes. Laſtly, he took out a large bible, and beckoned me to follow him into the circle. I obeyed.

"Be cautious not to utter a ſyllable!" whiſpered the ſtranger: "ſtep not out of the circle, and as you love yourſelf, dare not to look upon my face!"

Holding the crucifix in one hand, the bible in the other, he ſeemed to read with profound attention. The clock ſtruck one! As uſual I heard the ſpectre's ſteps upon the ſtair-caſe: but I was not ſeized with the accuſtomed ſhivering. I waited her approach with confidence. She entered the room, drew near the circle, and ſtopped. The ſtranger muttered ſome words, to me unintelligible. Then raiſing his head from the book, and extending the crucifix towards the ghoſt, he pronounced, in a voice diſtinct and ſolemn,

"Beatrice! Beatrice! Beatrice!"

"What wouldſt thou?" replied the apparition in a hollow faltering tone.

"What diſturbs thy ſleep? Why doſt thou afflict and torture this youth? How can reſt be reſtored to thy unquiet ſpirit?"

"I dare not tell! I muſt not tell! Fain would I repoſe in my grave, but ſtern commands force me to prolong my puniſhment!"

"Knoweſt thou this blood? Knoweſt thou in whoſe veins it flowed? Beatrice! Beatrice! In his name, I charge thee to anſwer me."

"I dare not diſobey my taſkers."

"Dareſt thou diſobey me?"

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He ſpoke in a commanding tone, and drew the ſable band from his forehead. In ſpite of his injunctions to the contrary, curioſity would not ſuffer me to keep my eyes off his face: I raiſed them, and beheld a burning croſs impreſſed upon his brow. For the horror with which this object inſpired me I cannot account, but I never felt its equal. My ſenſes left me for ſome moments: a myſterious dread overcame my courage; and had not the exorciſer caught my hand, I ſhould have fallen out of the circle.

When I recovered myſelf, I perceived that the burning croſs had produced an effect no leſs violent upon the ſpectre. Her countenance expreſſed reverence and horror, and her viſionary limbs were ſhaken by fear.

"Yes!" ſhe ſaid at length, "I tremble at that mark! I reſpect it! I obey you! Know then, that my bones lie ſtill unburied: they rot in the obſcurity of Lindenberg Hole. None but this youth has the right of conſigning them to the grave. His own lips have made over to me his body and his ſoul: never will I give back his promiſe, never ſhall he know a night devoid of terror, unleſs he engages to collect my mouldering bones, and depoſit them in the family vault of his Andaluſian caſtle. Then let thirty maſſes be ſaid for the repoſe of my ſpirit, and I trouble this world no more. Now let me depart. Thoſe flames are ſcorching!"

He let the hand drop ſlowly which held the crucifix, and which till then he had pointed towards her. The apparition bowed her head, and her form melted into air. The exorciſer

led me out of the circle. He replaced the bible, &c. in the cheſt, and then addreſſed himſelf to me, who ſtood near him ſpeechleſs from aſtoniſhment.

"Don Raymond, you have heard the conditions on which repoſe is promiſed you. Be it your buſineſs to fulfil them to the letter. For me, nothing more remains than to clear up the darkneſs ſtill ſpread over the ſpectre's hiſtory, and inform you, that when living Beatrice bore the name of las Ciſternas. She was the great aunt of your grandfather. In quality of your relation, her aſhes demand reſpect from you, though the enormity of her crimes muſt excite your abhorrence. The nature of thoſe crimes no one is more capable of explaining to you than myſelf. I was perſonally acquainted with the holy man who proſcribed her nocturnal riots in the caſtle of Lindenberg, and I hold this narrative from his own lips.

"Beatrice de las Ciſternas took the veil at an early age, not by her own choice, but at the expreſs command of her parents. She was then too young to regret the pleaſures of which her profeſſion deprived her: but no ſooner did her warm and voluptuous character begin to be developed, than ſhe abandoned herſelf freely to the impulſe of her paſſions, and ſeized the firſt opportunity to procure their gratification. This opportunity was at length preſented, after many obſtacles which only added new force to her deſires. She contrived to elope from the convent, and fled to Germany with the baron Lindenberg. She lived at his caſtle ſeveral months as his avowed concubine.

concubine. All Bavaria was ſcandalized by her impudent and abandoned conduct. Her feaſts vied in luxury with Cleopatra's, and Lindenberg became the theatre of the moſt unbridled debauchery. Not ſatisfied with diſplaying the incontinence of a proſtitute, ſhe profeſſed herſelf an atheiſt: ſhe took every opportunity to ſcoff at her monaſtic vows, and loaded with ridicule the moſt ſacred ceremonies of religion.

"Poſſeſſed of a character ſo depraved, ſhe did not long confine her affections to one object. Soon after her arrival at the caſtle, the baron's younger brother attracted her notice by his ſtrong-marked features, gigantic ſtature, and herculean limbs. She was not of an humour to keep her inclinations long unknown: but ſhe found in Otto von Lindenberg her equal in depravity. He returned her paſſion juſt ſufficiently to increaſe it; and when he had worked it up to the deſired pitch, he fixed the price of his love at his brother's murder. The wretch conſented to this horrible agreement. A night was pitched upon for perpetrating the deed. Otto, who reſided on a ſmall eſtate a few miles diſtant from the caſtle, promiſed that, at one in the morning, he would be waiting for her at Lindenberg-hole; that he would bring with him a party of choſen friends, by whoſe aid he doubted not being able to make himſelf maſter of the caſtle; and that his next ſtep ſhould be the uniting her hand to his. It was this laſt promiſe which over-ruled every ſcruple of Beatrice, ſince, in ſpite of his affection for her, the baron had declared poſitively, that he never would make her his wife.

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"The fatal night arrived. The baron ſlept in the arms of his perfidious miſtreſs, when the caſtle bell ſtruck "one." Immediately Beatrice drew a dagger from underneath her pillow, and plunged it in her paramour's heart. The baron uttered a ſingle dreadful groan, and expired. The murdereſs quitted her bed haſtily, took a lamp in one hand, in the other the bloody dagger, and bent her courſe towards the cavern. The porter dared not to refuſe opening the gates to one more dreaded in the caſtle than its maſter. Beatrice reached Lindenberg-hole unoppoſed, where, according to promiſe, ſhe found Otto waiting for her. He received, and liſtened to her narrative with tranſport: but ere ſhe had time to aſk why he came unaccompanied, he convinced her that he wiſhed for no witneſſes to their interview. Anxious to conceal his ſhare in the murder, and to free himſelf from a woman whoſe violent and atrocious character made him tremble with reaſon for his own ſafety, he had reſolved on the deſtruction of his wretched agent. Ruſhing upon her ſuddenly, he wreſted the dagger from her hand. He plunged it, ſtill reeking with his brother's blood, in her boſom, and put an end to her exiſtence by repeated blows.

"Otto now ſucceeded to the barony of Lindenberg. The murder was attributed ſolely to the fugitive nun, and no one ſuſpected him to have perſuaded her to the action. But though his crime was unpuniſhed by man, God's juſtice permitted him not to enjoy in peace his blood-ſtained honours. Her bones lying ſtill unburied in the cave, the reſtleſs

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ſoul of Beatrice continued to inhabit the caſtle. Dreſſed in her religious habit, in memory of her vows broken to heaven, furniſhed with the dagger which had drunk the blood of her paramour, and holding the lamp which had guided her flying ſteps, every night did ſhe ſtand before the bed of Otto. The moſt dreadful confuſion reigned through the caſtle. The vaulted chambers reſounded with ſhrieks and groans; and the ſpectre, as ſhe ranged along the antique galleries, uttered an incoherent mixture of prayers and blaſphemies. Otto was unable to withſtand the ſhock which he felt at this fearful viſion: its horrors increaſed with every ſucceeding appearance. His alarm at length became ſo inſupportable, that his heart burſt, and one morning he was found in his bed totally deprived of warmth and animation. His death did not put an end to the nocturnal riots. The bones of Beatrice continued to lie unburied, and her ghoſt continued to haunt the caſtle.

"The domains of Lindenberg now fell to a diſtant relation. But terrified by the accounts given him of the bleeding nun [ſo was the ſpectre called by the multitude] the new baron called to his aſſiſtance a celebrated exorciſer. This holy man ſucceeded in obliging her to temporary repoſe: but though ſhe diſcovered to him her hiſtory, he was not permitted to reveal it to others, or cauſe her ſkeleton to be removed to hallowed ground. That office was reſerved for you: and till your coming her ghoſt was doomed to wander about the caſtle, and lament the crime which ſhe had there committed. However, the exorciſer obliged her to ſilence during

during his life-time. So long as he existed, the haunted chamber was shut up, and the spectre was invisible. At his death, which happened in five years after, she again appeared, but only once on every fifth year, on the same day and at the same hour when she plunged her knife in the heart of her sleeping lover: she then visited the cavern which held her mouldering skeleton, returned to the castle as soon as the clock struck two, and was seen no more till the next five years had elapsed.

"She was doomed to suffer during the space of a century. That period is past. Nothing now remains but to consign to the grave the ashes of Beatrice. I have been the means of releasing you from your visionary tormentor; and amidst all the sorrows which oppress me, to think that I have been of use to you, is some consolation. Youth farewell! May the ghost of your relation enjoy that rest in the tomb, which the Almighty's vengeance has denied to me for ever!"

Here the stranger prepared to quit the apartment.

"Stay yet one moment!" said I; "you have satisfied my curiosity with regard to the spectre, but you leave me a prey to yet greater respecting yourself. Deign to inform me to whom I am under such real obligations. You mention circumstances long past, and persons long dead: you were personally acquainted with the exorciser, who, by your own account, has been deceased near a century. How am I to account for this? What means that burning cross upon your forehead, and why did the sight of it strike such horror to my soul?"

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On theſe points he for ſome time refuſed to ſatisfy me. At length, overcome by my entreaties, he conſented to clear np the whole, on condition that I would defer his explanation till the next day. With his requeſt I was obliged to comply, and he left me. In the morning my firſt care was to enquire after the myſterious ſtranger. Conceive my diſappointment, when informed that he had already quitted Ratiſbon. I diſpatched meſſengers in purſuit of him, but in vain. No traces of the fugitive were diſcovered. Since that moment I never have heard any more of him, and 'tis moſt probable that I never ſhall."

[Lorenzo here interrupted his friend's narrative:

"How!" ſaid he, "you have never diſcovered who he was, or even formed a gueſs?"

"Pardon me," replied the marquis: "when I related this adventure to my uncle, the cardinal-duke, he told me that he had no doubt of this ſingular man's being the celebrated character known univerſally by the name of *the wandering Jew*. His not being permitted to paſs more than fourteen days on the ſame ſpot, the burning croſs impreſſed upon his forehead, the effect which it produced upon the beholders, and many other circumſtances, gave this ſuppoſition the colour of truth. The cardinal is fully perſuaded of it; and for my own part I am inclined to adopt the only ſolution which offers itſelf to this riddle." I return to the narrative from which I have digreſſed.]

From this period I recovered my health ſo rapidly as to aſtoniſh my phyſicians. The bleeding

bleeding nun appeared no more, and I was ſoon able to ſet out for Lindenberg. The baron received me with open arms. I confided to him the ſequel of my adventure; and he was not a little pleaſed to find that his manſion would be no longer troubled with the phantom's quinquennial viſits. I was ſorry to perceive, that abſence had not weakened Donna Rodolpha's imprudent paſſion. In a private converſation which I had with her during my ſhort ſtay at the caſtle, ſhe renewed her attempts to perſuade me to return her affection. Regarding her as the primary cauſe of all my ſufferings, I entertained for her no other ſentiment than diſguſt. The ſkeleton of Beatrice was found in the place which ſhe had mentioned. This being all that I ſought at Lindenberg, I haſtened to quit the baron's domains, equally anxious to perform the obſequies of the murdered nun, and eſcape the importunity of a woman whom I deteſted. I departed, followed by Donna Rodolpha's menaces, that my contempt ſhould not be long unpuniſhed.

I now bent my courſe towards Spain with all diligence. Lucas with my baggage had joined me during my abode at Lindenberg. I arrived in my native country without any accident, and immediately proceeded to my father's caſtle in Andaluſia. The remains of Beatrice were depoſited in the family vault, all due ceremonies performed, and the number of maſſes ſaid which ſhe had required. Nothing now hindered me from employing all my endeavours to diſcover the retreat of Agnes. The baroneſs had aſſured me, that her niece had

had already taken the veil: this intelligence I ſuſpected to have been forged by jealouſy, and hoped to find my miſtreſs ſtill at liberty to accept my hand. I enquired after her family; I found that before her daughter could reach Madrid, Donna Ineſilla was no more: you, my dear Lorenzo, were ſaid to be abroad, but where I could not diſcover: your father was in a diſtant province, on a viſit to the duke de Medina; and as to Agnes, no one could or would inform me what was become of her. Theodore, according to promiſe, had returned to Straſbourg, where he found his grandfather dead, and Marguerite in poſſeſſion of his fortune. All her perſuaſions to remain with her were fruitleſs: he quitted her a ſecond time, and followed me to Madrid. He exerted himſelf to the utmoſt in forwarding my ſearch: but our united endeavours were unattended by ſucceſs. The retreat which concealed Agnes remained an impenetrable myſtery, and I began to abandon all hopes of recovering her.

About eight months ago I was returning to my hotel in a melancholy humour, after paſſing the evening at the play-houſe. The night was dark, and I was unaccompanied. Plunged in reflections which were far from being agreeable, I perceived not that three men had followed me from the theatre, till, on turning into an unfrequented ſtreet, they all attacked me at the ſame time with the utmoſt fury. I ſprang back a few paces, drew my ſword, and threw my cloak over my left arm. The obſcurity of the night was in my favour. For the moſt part the blows of the aſſaſſins, being aimed at random, failed to touch me. I at length

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was fortunate enough to lay one of my adverſaries at my feet: but before this I had already received ſo many wounds, and was ſo warmly preſſed, that my deſtruction would have been inevitable, had not the claſhing of ſwords called a cavalier to my aſſiſtance. He ran towards me with his ſword drawn: ſeveral domeſtics followed him with torches. His arrival made the combat equal: yet would not the bravoes abandon their deſign, till their ſervants were on the point of joining us. They then fled away, and we loſt them in the obſcurity.

The ſtranger now addreſſed himſelf to me with politeneſs, and enquired whether I was wounded. Faint with the loſs of blood, I could ſcarcely thank him for his ſeaſonable aid, and entreat him to let ſome of his ſervants convey me to the hotel de las Ciſternas. I no ſooner mentioned the name than he profeſſed himſelf an acquaintance of my father's, and declared that he would not permit my being tranſported to ſuch a diſtance, before my wounds had been examined. He added, that his houſe was hard by, and begged me to accompany him thither. His manner was ſo earneſt, that I could not reject his offer; and, leaning upon his arm, a few minutes brought me to the porch of a magnificent hotel.

On entering the houſe, an old grey-headed domeſtic came to welcome my conductor; he enquired when the duke, his maſter, meant to quit the country, and was anſwered, that he would remain there yet ſome months. My deliverer then deſired the family ſurgeon to be ſummoned without delay: his orders were obeyed.

obeyed. I was seated upon a sopha in a noble apartment; and my wounds being examined, they were declared to be very slight. The surgeon, however, advised me not to expose myself to the night air; and the stranger pressed me so earnestly to take a bed in his house, that I consented to remain where I was for the present.

Being now left alone with my deliverer, I took the opportunity of thanking him in more express terms than I had done hitherto; but he begged me to be silent upon the subject.

"I esteem myself happy," said he, "in having had it in my power to render you this little service; and I shall think myself eternally obliged to my daughter for detaining me so late at the convent of St. Clare. The high esteem in which I have ever beheld the marquis de las Cisternas, though accident has not permitted our being so intimate as I could wish, makes me rejoice in the opportunity of making his son's acquaintance. I am certain that my brother in whose house you now are, will lament his not being at Madrid to receive you himself: but in the duke's absence, I am master of the family, and may assure you, in his name, that every thing in the hotel de Medina is perfectly at your disposal."

Conceive my surprise, Lorenzo, at discovering in the person of my preserver, Don Gaston de Medina. It was only to be equalled by my secret satisfaction at the assurance, that Agnes inhabited the convent of St. Clare. This latter sensation was not a little weakened, when, in answer to my seemingly indifferent questions, he told me that his daughter had

really taken the veil. I ſuffered not my grief at this circumſtance to take root in my mind: I flattered myſelf with the idea, that my uncle's credit at the court of Rome would remove this obſtacle, and that, without difficulty, I ſhould obtain for my miſtreſs a diſpenſation from her vows. Buoyed up with this hope, I calmed the uneaſineſs of my boſom; and I redoubled my endeavours to appear grateful for the attention, and pleaſed with the ſociety, of Don Gaſton.

A domeſtic now entered the room, and informed me that the bravo whom I had wounded, diſcovered ſome ſigns of life. I deſired that he might be carried to my father's hotel, and ſaid that, as ſoon as he had recovered his voice, I would examine him reſpecting his reaſons for attempting my life. I was anſwered that he was already able to ſpeak, though with difficulty. Don Gaſton's curioſity made him preſs me to interrogate the aſſaſſin in his preſence; but this curioſity I was by no means inclined to gratify. One reaſon was, that, doubting from whence the blow came, I was unwilling to place before Don Gaſton's eyes the guilt of a ſiſter. Another was, that I feared to be recognized for Alphonſo d'Alvarada, and precautions taken in conſequence to keep me from the ſight of Agnes. To avow my paſſion for his daughter, and endeavour to make him enter into my ſchemes, what I knew of Don Gaſton's character convinced me would be an imprudent ſtep; and conſidering it to be eſſential that he ſhould know me for no other than the conde de las Ciſternas, I was determined not to let him

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hear the bravo's confeſſion. I inſinuated to him, that as I ſuſpected a lady to be concerned in the buſineſs, whoſe name might accidentally eſcape from the aſſaſſin, it was neceſſary for me to examine the man in private. Don Gaſton's delicacy would not permit his urging the point any longer, and in conſequence, the bravo was conveyed to my hotel.

The next morning I took leave of my hoſt, who was to return to the duke on the ſame day. My wounds had been ſo trifling, that, except being obliged to wear my arm in a ſling for a ſhort time, I felt no inconvenience from the night's adventure. The ſurgeon, who examined the bravo's wound declared it to be mortal: he had juſt time to confeſs, that he had been inſtigated to murder me by the revengeful Donna Rodolpha, and expired in a few minutes after.

All my thoughts were now bent upon getting to the ſpeech of my lovely nun. Theodore ſet himſelf to work, and, for this time, with better ſucceſs. He attacked the gardener of St. Clare ſo forcibly with bribes and promiſes, that the old man was entirely gained over to my intereſts; and it was ſettled that I ſhould be introduced into the convent in the character of his aſſiſtant. The plan was put into execution without delay. Diſguiſed in a common habit, and a black patch covering one of my eyes, I was preſented to the lady prioreſs, who condeſcended to approve of the gardener's choice. I immediately entered upon my employment. Botany having been a favourite ſtudy with me, I was by no means at a loſs in my new ſtation. For ſome days I

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continued to work in the convent-garden without meeting the object of my diſguiſe. On the fourth morning I was more ſucceſsful. I heard the voice of Agnes, and was ſpeeding towards the ſound, when the ſight of the domina ſtopped me. I drew back with caution, and concealed myſelf behind a thick clump of trees.

The prioreſs advanced, and ſeated herſelf with Agnes on a bench at no great diſtance. I heard her in an angry tone, blame her companion's continual melancholy. She told her that to weep the loſs of any lover, in her ſituation, was a crime; but that to weep the loſs of a faithleſs one was folly and abſurdity in the extreme. Agnes replied in ſo low a voice that I could not diſtinguiſh her words, but I perceived that ſhe uſed terms of gentleneſs and ſubmiſſion. The converſation was interrupted by the arrival of a young penſioner, who informed the domina that ſhe was waited for in the parlour. The old lady roſe, kiſſed the cheek of Agnes, and retired. The new-comer remained. Agnes ſpoke much to her in praiſe of ſomebody whom I could not make out; but her auditor ſeemed highly delighted, and intereſted by the converſation. The nun ſhewed her ſeveral letters: the other peruſed them with evident pleaſure, obtained permiſſion to copy them, and withdrew for that purpoſe to my great ſatisfaction.

No ſooner was ſhe out of ſight, than I quitted my concealment. Fearing to alarm my lovely miſtreſs, I drew near her gently, intending to diſcover myſelf by degrees. But who for a moment can diſcover the eyes of love? She

She raiſed her head at my approach, and recogniſed me in ſpite of my diſguiſe, at a ſingle glance. She roſe haſtily from her ſeat with an exclamation of ſurpriſe, and attempted to retire; but I followed her, detained her, and entreated to be heard. Perſuaded of my falſehood, ſhe refuſed to liſten to me, and ordered me poſitively to quit the garden. It was now my turn to refuſe. I proteſted that however dangerous might be the conſequences, I would not leave her till ſhe had heard my juſtification. I aſſured her, that ſhe had been deceived by the artifices of her relations: that I could convince her beyond the power of doubt, that my paſſion had been pure and diſintereſted; and I aſked her what ſhould induce me to ſeek her in the convent were I influenced by the ſelfiſh motives which my enemies had aſcribed to me.

My prayers, my arguments, and vows not to quit her till ſhe had promiſed to liſten to me, united her fears leſt the nuns ſhould ſee me with her, to her natural curioſity, and to the affection which ſhe ſtill felt for me, in ſpite of my ſuppoſed deſertion, at length prevailed. She told me that to grant my requeſt at that moment was impoſſible; but ſhe engaged to be at the ſame ſpot at eleven that night, and to converſe with me for the laſt time. Having obtained this promiſe, I releaſed her hand, and ſhe flew back with rapidity towards the convent.

I communicated my ſucceſs to my ally, the old gardener: he pointed out an hiding place, where I might ſhelter myſelf till night without fear of a diſcovery. Thither I betook myſelf

at

at the hour when I ought to have retired with my ſuppoſed maſter, and waited impatiently for the appointed time. The chillneſs of the night was in my favour, ſince it kept the other nuns confined to their cells. Agnes alone was inſenſible of the inclemency of the air, and, before eleven joined me at the ſpot which had witneſſed our former interview. Secure from interruption, I related to her the true cauſe of my diſappearing on the fatal fifth of May. She was evidently much affected by my narrative. When it was concluded, ſhe confeſſed the injuſtice of her ſuſpicions, and blamed herſelf for having taken the veil through deſpair at my ingratitude.

"But now it is too late to repine!" ſhe added; the die is thrown: I have pronounced my vows, and dedicated myſelf to the ſervice of heaven. I am ſenſible how ill I am calculated for a convent. My diſguſt at a monaſtic life increaſes daily: ennui and diſcontent are my conſtant companions; and I will not conceal from you that the paſſion which I formerly felt for one ſo near being my huſband, is not yet extinguiſhed in my boſom: but we muſt part! Inſuperable barriers divide us from each other, and on this ſide the grave we muſt never meet again!"

I now exerted myſelf to prove, that our union was not ſo impoſſible as ſhe ſeemed to think it. I vaunted to her the cardinal-duke of Lerma's influence at the court of Rome. I aſſured her, that I ſhould eaſily obtain a diſpenſation from her vows; and I doubted not but Don Gaſton would coincide with my views, when informed of my real name and long attachment. Agnes replied,

replied, that ſince I encouraged ſuch an hope, I could know but little of her father. Liberal and kind in every other reſpect, ſuperſtition formed the only ſtain upon his character. Upon this head he was inflexible: he ſacrificed his deareſt intereſts to his ſcruples, and would conſider it an inſult to ſuppoſe him capable of authoriſing his daughter to break her vows to heaven.

"But ſuppoſe," ſaid I, interrupting her—"ſuppoſe that he ſhould diſapprove of our union: let him remain ignorant of my proceedings till I have reſcued you from the priſon in which you are now confined. Once my wife, you are free from his authority. I need from him no pecuniary aſſiſtance; and when he ſees his reſentment to be unavailing, he will doubtleſs reſtore you to his favour. But, let the worſt happen: ſhould Don Gaſton be irreconcileable, my relations will vie with each other in making you forget his loſs; and you will find in my father a ſubſtitute for the parent of whom I ſhall deprive you."

"Don Raymond," replied Agnes, in a firm and reſolute voice, "I love my father: he has treated me harſhly in this one inſtance; but I have received from him, in every other, ſo many proofs of love, that his affection is become neceſſary to my exiſtence. Were I to quit the convent, he never would forgive me; nor can I think that, on his death-bed, he would leave me his curſe without ſhuddering at the very idea. Beſides, I am conſcious myſelf, that my vows are binding. Wilfully did I contract my engagement with heaven: I cannot break it without a crime. Then baniſh from

your mind the idea of our being ever united. I am devoted to religion; and however I may grieve at our ſeparation, I would oppoſe obſtacles myſelf, to what I feel would render me guilty."

I ſtrove to over-rule theſe ill-grounded ſcruples. We were ſtill diſputing upon the ſubject, when the convent-bell ſummoned the nuns to matins. Agnes was obliged to attend them; but ſhe left me not till I had compelled her to promiſe, that on the following night ſhe would be at the ſame place at the ſame hour. Theſe meetings continued for ſeveral weeks uninterrupted: and 'tis now, Lorenzo, that I muſt implore your indulgence. Reflect upon our ſituation, our youth, our long attachment. Weigh all the circumſtances which attended our aſſignations, and you will confeſs the temptation to have been irreſiſtible: you will even pardon me when I acknowledge that, in an unguarded moment, the honour of Agnes was ſacrificed to my paſſion."

[Lorenzo's eyes ſparkled with fury; a deep crimſon ſpread itſelf over his face: he ſtarted from his ſeat, and attempted to draw his ſword. The marquis was aware of his movement, and caught his hand: he preſſed it affectionately:

"My friend! my brother! hear me to the concluſion! Till then reſtrain your paſſion; and be at leaſt convinced, that if what I have related is criminal, the blame muſt fall upon me, and not upon your ſiſter."

Lorenzo ſuffered himſelf to be prevailed upon by Don Raymond's entreaties: he reſumed his place, and liſtened to the reſt of the narrative

rative with a gloomy and impatient countenance. The marquis thus continued:]

Scarcely was the firſt burſt of paſſion paſt, when Agnes recovering herſelf, ſtarted from my arms with horror. She called me infamous ſeducer, loaded me with the bittereſt reproaches, and beat her boſom in all the wildneſs of delirium. Aſhamed of my imprudence, I with difficulty found words to excuſe myſelf. I endeavoured to conſole her: I threw myſelf at her feet and entreated her forgiveneſs. She forced her hand from me, which I had taken and would have preſſed to my lips.

"Touch me not!" ſhe cried, with a violence which terrified me. "Monſter of perfidy and ingratitude, how have I been deceived in you! I looked upon you as my friend, my protector: I truſted myſelf in your hands with confidence, and relying upon your honour, thought that mine ran no riſk: and 'tis by you, whom I adored, that I am covered with infamy! 'Tis by you that I have been ſeduced into breaking my vows to God, that I am reduced to a level with the baſeſt of my ſex! Shame upon you, villain, you ſhall never ſee me more!"

She ſtarted from the bank on which ſhe was ſeated. I endeavoured to detain her; but ſhe diſengaged herſelf from me with violence, and took refuge in the convent.

I retired filled with confuſion and inquietude. The next morning I failed not, as uſual, to appear in the garden; but Agnes was no where to be ſeen. At night I waited for her at the place where we generally met. I found no better ſucceſs. Several days and nights paſſ-

ed away in the ſame manner. At length I ſaw my offended miſtreſs croſs the walk, on whoſe borders I was working: ſhe was accompanied by the ſame young penſioner, on whoſe arm ſhe ſeemed, from weakneſs, obliged to ſupport herſelf. She looked upon me for a moment, but inſtantly turned her head away. I waited her return; but ſhe paſſed on to the convent without paying any attention to me, or the penitent looks with which I implored her forgiveneſs.

As ſoon as the nuns were retired, the old gardener joined me with a ſorrowful air.

"Segnor," ſaid he, "it grieves me to ſay that I can be no longer of uſe to you; the lady whom you uſed to meet has juſt aſſured me, that if I admitted you again into the garden, ſhe would diſcover the whole buſineſs to the lady prioreſs. She bade me tell you alſo, that your preſence was an inſult, and that if you ſtill poſſeſs the leaſt reſpect for her, you will never attempt to ſee her more. Excuſe me then for informing you that I can favour your diſguiſe no longer. Should the prioreſs be acquainted with my conduct, ſhe might not be contented diſmiſſing me her ſervice: out of revenge ſhe might accuſe me of having profaned the convent, and cauſe me to be thrown into the priſons of the inquiſition."

Fruitleſs were my attempts to conquer his reſolution. He denied me all future entrance into the garden; and Agnes perſevered in neither letting me ſee or hear from her. In about a fortnight after, a violent illneſs which had ſeized my father obliged me to ſet out for Andaluſia. I haſtened thither, and, as I imagined, found

found the marquis at the point of death. Though on its firſt appearance, his complaint was declared mortal, he lingered out ſeveral months; during which my attendance upon him in his malady, and the occupation of ſettling his affairs after his deceaſe, permitted not my quitting Andaluſia. Within theſe four days I returned to Madrid, and, on arriving at my hotel I there found this letter waiting for me.

[Here the marquis unlocked the drawer of a cabinet; he took out a folded paper, which he preſented to his auditor. Lorenzo opened it, and recogniſed his ſiſter's hand. The contents were as follows:

"INTO what an abyſs of miſery have you "plunged me! Raymond, you force me to "become as criminal as yourſelf. I had re- "ſolved never to ſee you more; if poſſible to "forget you; if not only to remember you "with hate. A being, for whom I already "feel a mother's tenderneſs, ſolicits me to "pardon my ſeducer, and apply to his love "for the means of preſervation. Raymond "your child lives in my boſom. I tremble at "the vengeance of the prioreſs. I tremble "much for myſelf, yet more for the innocent "creature whoſe exiſtence depends upon mine. "Both of us are loſt, ſhould my ſituation be "diſcovered. Adviſe me, then, what ſteps to "take, but ſeek not to ſee me. The garden- "er, who undertakes to deliver this, is diſmiſſ- "ed, and we have nothing to hope from that "quarter. The man engaged in his place is "of incorruptible fidelity. The beſt means "of conveying to me your anſwer, is by con-

"cealing it under the great ſtatue of St. Francis,
"which ſtands in the Capuchin cathedral; thi-
"ther I go every Thurſday to confeſſion, and
"ſhall eaſily have an opportunity of ſecuring
"your letter. I hear that you are now abſent
"from Madrid. Need I entreat you to write
"the very moment of your return? I will not
"think it. Ah! Raymond! mine is a cruel
"ſituation! Deceived by my neareſt relations,
"compelled to embrace a profeſſion the duties
"of which I am ill calculated to perform, con-
"ſcious of the ſanctity of thoſe duties, and
"ſeduced into violating them by one whom I
"leaſt ſuſpected of perfidy, I am now obliged,
"by circumſtances, to chuſe between death and
"perjury. Woman's timidity, and maternal
"affection permit me not to balance in the
"choice. I feel all the guilt into which I
"plunge myſelf when I yield to the plan which
"you before propoſed to me. My poor fa-
"ther's death, which has taken place ſince
"we met, has removed one obſtacle. He
"ſleeps in his grave, and I no longer dread his
"anger. But from the anger of God, oh!
"Raymond! who ſhall ſhield me? Who can
"protect me againſt my conſcience, againſt
"myſelf? I dare not dwell upon theſe
"thoughts; they will drive me mad. I have
"taken my reſolution. Procure a diſpenſati-
"on from my vows. I am ready to fly with
"you. Write to me, my huſband! Tell me
"that abſence has not abated your love! Tell
"me that you will reſcue from death your un-
"born child, and its unhappy mother. I live
"in all the agonies of terror. Every eye which
"is fixed upon me, ſeems to read my ſecret

"and

"and my ſhame. And you are the cauſe of "thoſe agonies! Oh! when my heart firſt "loved you, how little did it ſuſpect you of "making it feel ſuch pangs!

"AGNES."

Having peruſed the letter, Lorenzo reſtored it in ſilence. The Marquis replaced it in the cabinet, and then proceeded:]

Exceſſive was my joy at reading this intelligence, ſo earneſtly deſired, ſo little expected. My plan was ſoon arranged. When don Gaſton diſcovered to me his daughter's retreat, I entertained no doubt of her readineſs to quit the convent: I had therefore, entruſted the cardinal-duke of Lerma with the whole affair, who immediately buſied himſelf in obtaining the neceſſary bull. Fortunately I had afterwards neglected to ſtop his proceedings. Not long ſince I received a letter from him, ſtating that he expected daily to receive the order from the court of Rome. Upon this I would willingly have relied; but the cardinal wrote me word, that I muſt find ſome means of conveying Agnes out of the convent, unknown to the prioreſs. He doubted not but this latter would be much incenſed by loſing a perſon of ſuch high rank from her ſociety, and conſider the renunciation of Agnes as an inſult to her houſe. He repreſented her as a woman of a violent and revengeful character, capable of proceeding to the greateſt extremities. It was therefore to be feared leſt, by confining Agnes in the convent, ſhe ſhould fruſtrate my hopes, and render the pope's mandate unavailing. Influenced by this conſideration, I re-

ſolved to carry off my miſtreſs, and conceal her till the arrival of the expected bull in the cardinal-duke's eſtate. He approved of my deſign, and profeſſed himſelf ready to give a ſhelter to the fugitive. I next cauſed the new gardener of St. Clare to be ſeized privately, and confined in my hotel. By this means I became maſter of the key to the garden-door, and I had now nothing more to do than prepare Agnes for the elopement. This was done by the letter which you ſaw me deliver this evening. I told her in it that I ſhould be ready to receive her at twelve to-morrow night; that I had ſecured the key of the garden, and that ſhe might depend upon a ſpeedy releaſe.

You have now, Lorenzo, heard the whole of my long narrative. I have nothing to ſay in my excuſe ſave that my intentions towards your ſiſter have been ever the moſt honourable: that it has always been, and ſtill is, my deſign to make her my wife; and that I truſt, when you conſider theſe circumſtances, our youth, and our attachment, you will not only forgive our momentary lapſe from virtue, but will aid me in repairing my faults to Agnes, and ſecuring a lawful title to her perſon and her heart.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

O you! whom Vanity's light bark conveys
On Fame's mad voyage by the wind of Praiſe,
With what a ſhifting gale your courſe you ply,
For ever ſunk too low, or borne too high!
Who pants for glory finds but ſhort repoſe:
A breath revives him, and a breath o'erthrows.
POPE.

HERE the marquis concluded his adventures. Lorenzo, before he could determine on his reply, paſſed ſome moments in reflection. At length he broke ſilence.

"Raymond," ſaid he, taking his hand, "ſtrict honour would oblige me to waſh off in your blood the ſtain thrown upon my family; but the circumſtances of your caſe forbid me to conſider you as an enemy. The temptation was too great to be reſiſted. 'Tis the ſuperſtition of my relations which has occaſioned theſe misfortunes, and they are more the offenders than yourſelf and Agnes. What has paſſed between you cannot be recalled, but may yet be repaired by uniting you to my ſiſter. You have ever been, you ſtill continue to be, my deareſt, and indeed my only friend. I feel for Agnes the trueſt affection, and there is no one on whom I would beſtow her more willingly than on yourſelf. Purſue, then, your deſign. I will accompany you to-morrow night, and conduct her myſelf to the houſe of the cardinal. My preſence will be a ſanction for her conduct, and prevent her

incurring blame by her flight from the convent."

The marquis thanked him in terms by no means deficient in gratitude. Lorenzo then informed him, that he had nothing more to apprehend from Donna Rodolpha's enmity. Five months had already elapſed ſince, in an exceſs of paſſion, ſhe broke a blood-veſſel, and expired in the courſe of a few hours. He then proceeded to mention the intereſts of Antonia. The marquis was much ſurpriſed at hearing of this new relation. His father had carried his hatred of Elvira to the grave, and had never given the leaſt hint that he knew what was become of his eldeſt ſon's widow. Don Raymond aſſured his friend, that he was not miſtaken in ſuppoſing him ready to acknowledge his ſiſter-in-law, and her amiable daughter. The preparations for the elopement would not permit his viſiting them the next day; but, in the mean while, he deſired Lorenzo to aſſure them of his friendſhip, and to ſupply Elvira, upon his account, with any ſums which ſhe might want. This the youth promiſed to do, as ſoon as her abode ſhould be known to him. He then took leave of his future brother, and returned to the palace de Medina.

The day was already on the point of breaking when the marquis retired to his chamber. Conſcious that his narrative would take up ſome hours, and wiſhing to ſecure himſelf from interruption, on returning to the hotel he ordered his attendants not to ſit up for him; conſequently, he was ſomewhat ſurpriſed, on entering his anti-room, to find Theodore

eſtabliſhed

eſtabliſhed there. The page ſat near a table with a pen in his hand, and was ſo totally occupied by his employment, that he perceived not his lord's approach. The marquis ſtopped to obſerve him. Theodore wrote a few lines, then pauſed, and ſcratched out a part of the writing; then wrote again, ſmiled, and ſeemed highly pleaſed with what he had been about. At laſt he threw down his pen, ſprang from his chair, and clapped his hands together joyfully.

"There it is!" cried he aloud: "now they are charming!"

His tranſports were interrupted by a laugh from the marquis, who ſuſpected the nature of his employment.

"What is ſo charming, Theodore?"

The youth ſtarted, and looked round: he bluſhed, ran to the table, ſeized the paper on which he had been writing, and conceaied it in confuſion.

"Oh! my lord, I knew not that you were ſo near me. Can I be of uſe to you? Lucas is already gone to bed."

"I ſhall follow his example when I have given my opinion of your verſes."

"My verſes, my lord?"

"Nay I am ſure that you have been writing ſome, for nothing elſe could have kept you awake till this time of the morning. Where are they, Theodore? I ſhall like to ſee your compoſition."

Theodore's cheeks glowed with ſtill deeper crimſon: he longed to ſhew his poetry, but firſt choſe to be preſſed for it.

"Indeed, my lord, they are not worthy your attention."

"Not

"Not theſe verſes, which you juſt now declared to be ſo charming? Come, come, let me ſee whether our opinions are the ſame. I promiſe that you ſhall find in me an indulgent critic."

The boy produced his paper with ſeeming reluctance; but the ſatisfaction which ſparkled in his dark expreſſive eyes betrayed the vanity of his little boſom. The marquis ſmiled while he obſerved the emotions of an heart as yet but little ſkilled in veiling its ſentiments. He ſeated himſelf upon a ſopha. Theodore, while hope and fear contended on his anxious countenance, waited with inquietude for his maſter's deciſion, while the marquis read the following lines:

LOVE AND AGE.

THE night was dark; the wind blew cold;
Anacreon, grown moroſe and old,
Sat by his fire, and fed the cheerful flame:
Sudden the cottage-door expands,
And, lo! before him Cupid ſtands,
Caſts round a friendly glance, and greets him by his name.

"What! is it thou?" the ſtartled ſire
In ſullen tone exclaimed, while ire
With crimſon flushed his pale and wrinkled cheek:
"Wouldſt thou again with amorous rage
Inflame my boſom? Steeled by age,
Vain boy, to pierce my breaſt thine arrows are too weak.

"What ſeek you in this deſert drear?
No ſmiles or ſports inhabit here;
Ne'er did theſe vallies witneſs dalliance ſweet:
Eternal winter binds the plains;
Age in my houſe deſpotic reigns;
My garden boaſts no flower, my boſom boaſts no heat.

"Begone, and ſeek the blooming bower,
Where ſome ripe virgin courts thy power,
Or bid provoking dreams flit round her bed;
On Damon's amorous breaſt repoſe;

Wanton

Wanton on Chloe's lip of roſe,
Or make her bluſhing cheek a pillow for thy head,

" Be ſuch thy haunts! Theſe regions cold
Avoid! Nor think grown wiſe and old
This hoary head again thy yoke ſhall bear:
Remembering that my faireſt years
By thee were marked with ſighs and tears,
I think thy friendſhip falſe, and ſhun the guileful ſnare.

" I have not yet forgot the pains
I felt, while bound in Julia's chains:
The ardent flames with which my boſom burned;
The nights I paſſed deprived of reſt;
The jealous pangs which racked my breaſt;
My diſappointed hopes, and paſſion unreturned.

" Then fly, and curſe mine eyes no more!
Fly from my peaceful cottage-door!
No day, no hour, no moment ſhalt thou ſtay.
I know thy falſehood, ſcorn thy arts,
Diſtruſt thy ſmiles, and fear thy darts:
Traitor, begone, and ſeek ſome other to betray!"

" Does age, old man, your wits confound?"
Replied the offended god, and frowned:
[His frown was ſweet as is the virgin's ſmile!]
" Do you to me theſe words addreſs?
To me, who do not love you leſs,
Though you my friendſhip ſcorn, and pleaſures paſt revile!

" If one proud fair you chanced to find,
An hundred other nymphs were kind,
Whoſe ſmiles might well for Julia's frowns atone:
But ſuch is man! his partial hand
Unnumbered favours writes on ſand,
But ſtamps one little fault on ſolid laſting ſtone.

" Ingrate! Who led thee to the wave,
At noon where Lesbia loved to lave?
Who named the bower alone where Daphne lay?"
And who, when Celia ſhrieked for aid,
Bade you with kiſſes huſh the maid?
What other was't than Love, oh! falſe Anacreon, ſay!

" Then you could call me—'Gentle boy!
'My only bliſs! my ſource of joy!'
Then you could prize me dearer than your ſoul!
Could kiſs, and dance me on your knees;
And ſwear, not wine itſelf would pleaſe,
Had not the lip of Love firſt touched the flowing bowl!

" Muſt-

"Muſt thoſe ſweet days return no more?
Muſt I for aye your loſs deplore,
Baniſhed your heart, and from your favour driven?
Ah! no; my fears that ſmile denies;
That heaving breaſt, thoſe ſparkling eyes
Declare me ever dear, and all my faults forgiven.

"Again beloved, eſteemed, careſſed,
Cupid ſhall in thine arms be preſſed,
Sport on thy knees, or on thy boſom ſleep:
My torch thine age-ſtruck heart ſhall warm;
My hand pale winter's rage diſarm,
And Youth and Spring ſhall here once more their revels keep."—

A feather now of golden hue
He ſmiling from his pinion drew;
This to the poet's hand the boy commits;
And ſtraight before Anacreon's eyes
The faireſt dreams of fancy riſe,
And round his favoured head wild inſpiration flits.

His boſom glows with amorous fire;
Eager he graſps the magic lyre;
Swift o'er the tuneful chords his fingers move:
The feather plucked from Cupid's wing
Sweeps the too-long neglected ſtring,
While ſoft Anacreon ſings the power and praiſe of love.

Soon as that name was heard, the woods
Shook off their ſnows; the melting floods
Broke their cold chains, and winter fled away.
Once more the earth was decked with flowers;
Mild zephyrs breathed through blooming bowers;
High towered the glorious ſun, and poured the blaze of day.

Attracted by the harmonious ſound,
Sylvans and fauns the cot ſurround,
And curious crowd the minſtrel to behold:
The wood-nymphs haſte the ſpell to prove;
Eager they run; they liſt, they love,
And, while they hear the ſtrain, forget the man is old.

Cupid, to nothing conſtant long,
Perched on the harp attends the ſong,
Or ſtifles with a kiſs the dulcet notes:
Now on the poet's breaſt repoſes,
Now twines his hoary locks with roſes,
Or borne on wings of gold in wanton circle floats.

Then

Then thus Anacreon—" I no more
At other ſhrines my vows will pour,
Since Cupid deigns my numbers to inſpire:
From Phœbus or the blue-eyed maid
Now ſhall my verſe requeſt no aid,
For Love alone ſhall be the patron of my lyre.

"In lofty ſtrain, of earlier days,
I ſpread the king's or hero's praiſe,
And ſtruck the martial chords with epic fire:
But farewell hero! farewell, king!
Your deeds my lips no more ſhall ſing,
For Love alone ſhall be the ſubject of my lyre.

The marquis returned the paper with a ſmile of encouragement.

" Your little poem pleaſes me much," ſaid he: " however, you muſt not count my opinion for any thing. I am no judge of verſes, and for my own part never compoſed more than ſix lines in my life: thoſe ſix produced ſo unlucky an effect, that I am fully reſolved never to compoſe another. But I wander from my ſubject. I was going to ſay that you cannot employ your time worſe than in making verſes. An author, whether good or bad, or between both, is an animal whom every body is privileged to attack: for though all are not able to write books, all conceive themſelves able to judge them. A bad compoſition carries with it its own puniſhment—contempt and ridicule. A good one excites envy, and entails upon its author a thouſand mortifications: he finds himſelf aſſailed by partial and ill-humoured criticiſm: one man finds fault with the plan, another with the ſtyle, a third with the precept which it ſtrives to inculcate; and they who cannot ſucceed in finding fault with the book, employ themſelves in ſtigmatizing its author. They maliciouſly rake out from obſcurity

obſcurity every little circumſtance which may throw ridicule upon his private character or conduct, and aim at wounding the man ſince they cannot hurt the writer. In ſhort, to enter the liſts of literature is wilfully to expoſe yourſelf to the arrows of neglect, ridicule, envy, and diſappointment. Whether you write well or ill, be aſſured that you will not eſcape from blame. Indeed this circumſtance contains a young author's chief conſolation: he remembers that Lope de Vega and Calderona had unjuſt and envious critics, and he modeſtly conceives himſelf to be exactly in their predicament. But I am conſcious that all theſe ſage obſervations are thrown away upon you. Authorſhip is a mania, to conquer which no reaſons are ſufficiently ſtrong; and you might as eaſily perſuade me not to love, as I perſuade you not to write. However, if you cannot help being occaſionally ſeized with a poetical paroxyſm, take at leaſt the precaution of communicating your verſes to none but thoſe whoſe partiality for you ſecures their approbation."

"Then, my lord, you do not think theſe lines tolerable?" ſaid Theodore, with an humble and dejected air.

"You miſtake my meaning. As I ſaid before, they have pleaſed me much: but my regard for you makes me partial, and others might judge them leſs favourably. I muſt ſtill remark, that even my prejudice in your favour does not blind me ſo much as to prevent my obſerving ſeveral faults. For inſtance, you make a terrible confuſion of metaphors; you are too apt to make the ſtrength of your lines

conſiſt

conſiſt more in the words than ſenſe; ſome of the verſes only ſeem introduced in order to rhyme with others; and moſt of the beſt ideas are borrowed from other poets, though poſſibly you are unconſcious of the theft yourſelf. Theſe faults may occaſionally be excuſed in a work of length; but a ſhort poem muſt be correct and perfect."

"All this is true, ſegnor; but you ſhould conſider that I only write for pleaſure."

"Your defects are the leſs excuſable. Their incorrectneſs may be forgiven, who work for money, who are obliged to complete a given taſk in a given time, and are paid according to the bulk, not value of their productions. But in thoſe whom no neceſſity forces to turn author, who merely write for fame, and have full leiſure to poliſh their compoſitions, faults are unpardonable, and merit the ſharpeſt arrows of criticiſm."

The marquis roſe from the ſopha; the page looked diſcouraged and melancholy; and this did not eſcape his maſter's obſervation.

"However," added he, ſmiling, "I think that theſe lines do you no diſcredit. Your verſification is tolerable eaſy, and your ear ſeems to be juſt. The peruſal of your little poem upon the whole gave me much pleaſure: and if it is not aſking too great a favour, I ſhall be highly obliged to you for a copy."

The youth's countenance immediately cleared up. He perceived not the ſmile, half approving, half ironical, which accompanied the requeſt, and he promiſed the copy with great readineſs. The marquis withdrew to his chamber, much amuſed by the inſtantaneous effect produced

produced upon Theodore's vanity by the concluſion of his criticiſm. He threw himſelf upon his couch, ſleep ſoon ſtole over him, and his dreams preſented him with the moſt flattering pictures of happineſs with Agnes.

On reaching the hotel de Medina, Lorenzo's firſt care was to enquire for letters. He found ſeveral waiting for him; but that which he ſought was not amongſt them. Leonella had found it impoſſible to write that evening. However, her impatience to ſecure Don Chriſtoval's heart, on which ſhe flattered herſelf with having made no ſlight impreſſion, permitted her not to paſs another day without informing him where ſhe was to be found. On her return from the Capuchin-church, ſhe had related to her ſiſter, with exultation, how attentive an handſome cavalier had been to her; as alſo how his companion had undertaken to plead Antonia's cauſe with the marquis de las Ciſternas. Elvira received this intelligence with ſenſations very different from thoſe with which it was communicated. She blamed her ſiſter's imprudence in confiding her hiſtory to an abſolute ſtranger, and expreſſed her fears leſt this inconſiderate ſtep ſhould prejudice the marquis againſt her. The greateſt of her apprehenſions ſhe concealed in her own breaſt. She had obſerved, with inquietude, that at the mention of Lorenzo a deep bluſh ſpread itſelf over her daughter's cheek. The timid Antonia dared not to pronounce his name. Without knowing wherefore, ſhe felt embarraſſed when he was made the ſubject of diſcourſe, and endeavoured to change the converſation to Ambroſio. Elvira perceived the emotions

emotions of this young boſom: in conſequence ſhe inſiſted upon Leonella's breaking her promiſe to the cavaliers. A ſigh, which on hearing this order eſcaped from Antonia, confirmed the wary mother in her reſolution.

Through this reſolution Leonella was determined to break: ſhe conceived it to be inſpired by envy, and that her ſiſter dreaded her being elevated above her. Without imparting her deſign to any one, ſhe took an opportunity of diſpatching the following note to Lorenzo: it was delivered to him as ſoon as he awoke:

"Doubtleſs, Segnor Don Lorenzo, you have frequently accuſed me of ingratitude and forgetfulneſs: but on the word of a virgin it was out of my power to perform my promiſe yeſterday. I know not in what words o inform you, how ſtrange a reception my ſiſter gave your kind wiſh to viſit her. She is an odd woman, with many good points about her; but her jealouſy of me frequently makes her conceive notions quite unaccountable. On hearing that your friend had paid ſome little attention to me, ſhe immediately took the alarm: ſhe blamed my conduct, and has abſolutely forbidden me to let you know our abode. My ſtrong ſenſe of gratitude for your kind offers of ſervice, and ——————ſhall I confeſs it? my deſire to behold once more the too amiable Don Chriſtoval, will not permit my obeying her injunctions. I have therefore ſtolen a moment to inform you, that we lodge in the ſtrada di San Jago, four doors from the palace d'Albornos, and nearly oppoſite to the barber's Miguel Coello. Enquire for Donna Elvira.

Elvira Dalfa, ſince, in compliance with her father-in-law's order, my ſiſter continues to be called by her maiden name. At eight this evening you will be ſure of finding us: but let not a word drop, which may raiſe a ſuſpicion of my having written this letter. Should you ſee the Condé d'Oſſorio, tell him——I bluſh while I declare it——tell him that his preſence will be but too acceptable to the ſympathetic

"LEONELLA."

The latter ſentences were written in red ink, to expreſs the bluſhes of her cheek while ſhe committed an outrage upon her virgin modeſty.

Lorenzo had no ſooner peruſed this note, than he ſet out in ſearch of Don Chriſtoval. Not being able to find him in the courſe of the day, he proceeded to Donna Elvira's alone, to Leonella's infinite diſappointment. The domeſtic by whom he ſent up his name having already declared his lady to be at home, ſhe had no excuſe for refuſing his viſit; yet ſhe conſented to receive it with much reluctance. That reluctance was increaſed by the changes which his approach produced in Antonia's countenance; nor was it by any means abated, when the youth himſelf appeared. The ſymmetry of his perſon, animation of his features, and natural elegance of his manners and addreſs, convinced Elvira that ſuch a gueſt muſt be dangerous for her daughter. She reſolved to treat him with diſtant politeneſs, to decline his ſervices with gratitude for the tender of them, and to make him feel, without offence, that

that his future visits would be far from acceptable.

On his entrance he found Elvira, who was indisposed, reclining upon a sopha; Antonia sat by her embroidery frame; and Leonella, in a pastoral dress, held "*Montemayor's Diana.*" In spite of her being the mother of Antonia, Lorenzo could not help expecting to find in Elvira Leonella's true sister, and the daughter of "as honest a pains-taking shoemaker as any in Cordova." A single glance was sufficient to undeceive him. He beheld a woman whose features though impaired by time and sorrow, still bore the marks of distinguished beauty: a serious dignity reigned upon her countenance, but was tempered by a grace and sweetness which rendered her truly enchanting. Lorenzo fancied that she must have resembled her daughter in her youth, and readily excused the imprudence of the late Condé de las Cisternas. She desired him to be seated, and immediately resumed her place upon the sopha.

Antonia received him with a simple reverence, and continued her work: her cheeks were suffused with crimson, and she strove to conceal her emotion by leaning over her embroidery frame. Her aunt also chose to play off her airs of modesty: she affected to blush and tremble, and waited with her eyes cast down to receive, as she expected, the compliments of Don Christoval. Finding, after some time, that no sign of his approach was given, she ventured to look round the room, and perceived with vexation that Medina was unaccompanied. Impatience would not permit her waiting for an explanation: interrupting Lorenzo,

renzo, who was delivering Raymond's meſſage, ſhe deſired to know what was become of his friend.

He, who thought it neceſſary to maintain himſelf in her good graces, ſtrove to conſole her under her diſappointment by committing a little violence upon truth.

"Ah! ſegnora," he replied in a melancholy voice, "how grieved will he be at loſing this opportunity of paying you his reſpects! A relation's illneſs has obliged him to quit Madrid in haſte: but on his return he will doubtleſs ſeize the firſt moment with tranſport to throw himſelf at your feet!"

As he ſaid this, his eyes met thoſe of Elvira: ſhe puniſhed his falſehood ſufficiently by darting at him a look expreſſive of diſpleaſure and reproach. Neither did the deceit anſwer his intention. Vexed and diſappointed, Leonella roſe from her ſeat, and retired in dudgeon to her own apartment.

Lorenzo haſtened to repair the fault which had injured him in Elvira's opinion. He related his converſation with the marquis reſpecting her: he aſſured her that Raymond was prepared to acknowledge her for his brother's widow; and that, till it was in his power to pay his compliments to her in perſon, Lorenzo was commiſſioned to ſupply his place. This intelligence relieved Elvira from an heavy weight of uneaſineſs: ſhe had now found a protector for the fatherleſs Antonia, for whoſe future fortunes ſhe had ſuffered the greateſt apprehenſions. She was not ſparing of her thanks to him, who had interfered ſo generouſly

roufly in her behalf; but ſtill ſhe gave him no invitation to repeat his viſit. However, when upon riſing to depart he requeſted permiſſion to enquire after her health occaſionally, the polite earneſtneſs of his manner, gratitude for his ſervices, and reſpect for his friend the marquis, would not admit of a refuſal. She conſented reluctantly to receive him: he promiſed not to abuſe her goodneſs, and quitted the houſe.

Antonio was now left alone with her mother: A temporary ſilence enſued. Both wiſhed to ſpeak upon the ſame ſubject, but neither knew how to introduce it. The one felt a baſhfulneſs which ſealed up her lips, and for which ſhe could not account; the other feared to find her apprehenſions true, or to inſpire her daughter with notions to which ſhe might be ſtill a ſtranger. At length Elvira began the converſation.

"That is a charming young man, Antonia; I am much pleaſed with him. Was he long near you yeſterday in the cathedral?"

"He quitted me not for a moment while I ſtaid in the church: he gave me his ſeat, and was very obliging and attentive."

"Indeed? Why then have you never mentioned his name to me? your aunt launched out in praiſe of his friend, and you vaunted Ambroſio's eloquence; but neither ſaid a word of Don Lorenzo's perſon and accompliſhments. Had not Leonella ſpoken of his readineſs to undertake our cauſe, I ſhould not have known him to be in exiſtence."

She pauſed. Antonia coloured, but was ſilent.

"Perhaps

"Perhaps you judge him leſs favourably than I do. In my opinion his figure is pleaſing, his converſation ſenſible, and manners engaging. Still he may have ſtruck you differently: you may think him diſagreeable, and——"

"Diſagreeable? Oh! dear mother, how ſhould I poſſibly think him ſo? I ſhould be very ungrateful were I not ſenſible of his kindneſs yeſterday, and very blind if his merits had eſcaped me. His figure is ſo graceful, ſo noble! His manners ſo gentle, yet ſo manly! I never yet ſaw ſo many accompliſhments united in one perſon, and I doubt whether Madrid can produce his equal."

"Why then were you ſo ſilent in praiſe of this phœnix of Madrid? Why was it concealed from me, that his ſociety had afforded you pleaſure?"

"In truth I know not: you aſk me a queſtion which I cannot reſolve myſelf. I was on the point of mentioning him myſelf a thouſand times; his name was conſtantly on my lips; but when I would have pronounced it, I wanted courage to execute my deſign. However, if I did not ſpeak of him, it was not that I thought of him the leſs."

"That I believe. But ſhall I tell you why you wanted courage? It was becauſe, accuſtomed to confide to me your moſt ſecret thoughts, you knew not how to conceal, yet feared to acknowledge, that your heart nouriſhed a ſentiment which you were conſcious I ſhould diſapprove. Come hither to me, my child."

Antonia

Antonia quitted her embroidery frame, threw herſelf upon her knees by the ſopha, and hid her face in her mother's lap.

"Fear not, my ſweet girl! Conſider me equally as your friend and parent, and apprehend no reproof from me. I have read the emotions of your boſom; you are yet ill ſkilled in concealing them, and they could not eſcape my attentive eye. This Lorenzo is dangerous to your repoſe; he has already made an impreſſion upon your heart. 'Tis true that I perceive eaſily that your affection is returned: but what can be the conſequences of this attachment? you are poor and friendleſs, my Antonia; Lorenzo is the heir of the duke of Medina Celi. Even ſhould himſelf mean honourably, his uncle never will conſent to your union; nor, without that uncle's conſent will I. By ſad experience I know what ſorrow ſhe muſt endure, who marries into a family unwilling to receive her. Then ſtruggle with your affection: whatever pains it may coſt you, ſtrive to conquer it. Your heart is tender and ſuſceptible: it has already received a ſtrong impreſſion; but when once convinced that you ſhould not encourage ſuch ſentiments, I truſt that you have ſufficient fortitude to drive them from your boſom."

Antonia kiſſed her hand and promiſed implicit obedience. Elvira then continued——

"To prevent your paſſion from growing ſtronger, it will be needful to prohibit Lorenzo's viſits. The ſervice which he has rendered me permits not my forbidding them poſitively; but unleſs I judge too favourably of his character, he will diſcontinue them without taking offence, if I confeſs to him my reaſons, and throw myſelf entirely on his generoſity. The

next time that I ſee him, I will honeſtly avow to him the embarraſſment which his preſence occaſions. How ſay you, my child? Is not this meaſure neceſſary?"

Antonia ſubſcribed to every thing without heſitation, though not without regret. Her mother kiſſed her affectionately and retired to bed. Antonia followed her example, and vowed ſo frequently never more to think of Lorenzo, that till ſleep cloſed her eyes ſhe thought of nothing elſe.

While this was paſſing at Elvira's, Lorenzo haſtened to rejoin the marquis. Every thing was ready for the ſecond elopement of Agnes; and at twelve the two friends with a coach and four were at the garden-wall of the convent. Don Raymond drew out his key, and unlocked the door. They entered and waited for ſome time in expectation of being joined by Agnes. At length the marquis grew impatient: beginning to fear that his ſecond attempt would ſucced no better than the firſt, he propoſed to reconnoitre the convent. The friends advanced towards it. Every thing was ſtill and dark. The prioreſs was anxious to keep the ſtory a ſecret, fearing leſt the crime of one of its members ſhould bring diſgrace upon the whole community, or that the interpoſition of powerful relations ſhould deprive her vengeance of its intended victim. She took care therefore to give the lover of Agnes no cauſe to ſuppoſe that his deſign was diſcovered, and his miſtreſs on the point of ſuffering the puniſhment of her fault. The ſame reaſon made her reject the idea of arreſting the unknown ſeducer in the garden: ſuch a proceeding would have created much diſturbance, and the diſgrace of her convent

convent would have been noiſed about Madrid. She contented herſelf with confining Agnes cloſely: as to the lover, ſhe left him at liberty to purſue his deſigns. What ſhe had expected was the reſult. The marquis and Lorenzo waited in vain till the break of day; they then retired without noiſe, alarmed at the failure of their plan, and ignorant of the cauſe of its ill ſucceſs.

The next morning Lorenzo went to the convent, and requeſted to ſee his ſiſter. The prioreſs appeared at the grate with a melancholy countenance. She informed him that for ſeveral days Agnes had appeared much agitated; that ſhe had been preſſed by the nuns in vain to reveal the cauſe, and apply to their tenderneſs for advice and conſolation; that ſhe had obſtinately perſiſted in concealing the cauſe of her diſtreſs; but that on Thurſday evening it had produced ſo violent an effect upon her conſtitution, that ſhe had fallen ill, and was actually confined to her bed. Lorenzo did not credit a ſyllable of this account: he inſiſted upon ſeeing his ſiſter; if ſhe was unable to come to the grate, he deſired to be admitted to her cell. The prioreſs croſſed herſelf! ſhe was ſhocked at the very idea of a man's profane eye pervading the interior of her holy manſion, and profeſſed herſelf aſtoniſhed that Lorenzo could think of ſuch a thing. She told him that his requeſt could not be granted; but that, if he returned the next day, ſhe hoped that her beloved daughter would then be ſufficiently recovered to join him at the parlour grate. With this anſwer Lorenzo was obliged to retire, unſatisfied, and trembling for his ſiſter's ſafety.

He returned the next morning at an early hour. "Agnes was worſe; the phyſician had pronounced her to be in imminent danger; ſhe was ordered to remain quiet, and it was utterly impoſſible for her to receive her brother's viſit." Lorenzo ſtormed at this anſwer, but there was no other reſource. He raved, he entreated, he threatened; no means were left untried to obtain a ſight of Agnes. His endeavours were as fruitleſs as thoſe of the day before, and he returned in deſpair to the marquis. On his ſide, the latter had ſpared no pains to diſcover what had occaſioned his plot to fail. Don Chriſtoval, to whom the affair was now entruſted, endeavoured to worm out the ſecret from the old portereſs of St. Clare, with whom he had formed an acquaintance; but ſhe was too much upon her guard, and he gained from her no intelligence. The marquis was almoſt diſtracted, and Lorenzo felt ſcarcely leſs inquietude. Both were convinced that the purpoſed elopement muſt have been diſcovered: they doubted not but the malady of Agnes was a pretence, but they knew not by what means to reſcue her from the hands of the prioreſs.

Regularly every day did Lorenzo viſit the convent: as regularly was he informed that his ſiſter rather grew worſe than better. Certain that her indiſpoſition was feigned, theſe accounts did not alarm him: but his ignorance of her fate, and of the motives which induced the prioreſs to keep her from him, excited the moſt ſerious uneaſineſs. He was ſtill uncertain what ſteps he ought to take, when the marquis received a letter from the cardinal-

duke

duke of Lerma. It incloſed the pope's expected bull, ordering that Agnes ſhould be releaſed from her vows, and reſtored to her relations. This eſſential paper decided at once the proceedings of her friends; they reſolved that Lorenzo ſhould carry it to the domina without delay, and demand that his ſiſter ſhould be inſtantly given up to him. Againſt this mandate illneſs could not be pleaded: it gave her brother the power of removing her inſtantly to the palace de Medina, and he determined to uſe that power on the following day.

His mind relieved from inquietude reſpecting his ſiſter, and his ſpirits raiſed by the hope of ſoon reſtoring her to freedom, he now had time to give a few moments to love and to Antonia. At the ſame hour as on his former viſit, he repaired to Donna Elvira's. She had given orders for his admiſſion. As ſoon as he was announced, her daughter retired with Leonella; and when he entered the chamber, he found the lady of the houſe alone. She received him with leſs diſtance than before, and deſired him to place himſelf near her upon the ſopha. She then, without loſing time, opened her buſineſs, as had been agreed between herſelf and Antonia.

"You muſt not think me ungrateful, Don Lorenzo, or forgetful how eſſential are the ſervices which you have rendered me with the marquis. I feel the weight of my obligations: nothing under the ſun ſhould induce my taking the ſtep to which I am now compelled, but the intereſt of my child, of my beloved Antonia. My health is declining; God only

knows how ſoon I may be ſummoned before his throne. My daughter will be left without parents, and, ſhould ſhe loſe the protection of the Ciſternas family, without friends. She is young and artleſs, uninſtructed in the world's perfidy, and with charms ſufficient to render her an object of ſeduction. Judge then how I muſt tremble at the proſpect before her! Judge, how anxious I muſt be to keep her from their ſociety, who may excite the yet dormant paſſions of her boſom. You are amiable, Don Lorenzo; Antonia has a ſuſceptible, a loving heart, and is grateful for the favours conferred upon us by your interference with the marquis. Your preſence makes me tremble: I fear leſt it ſhould inſpire her with ſentiments which may embitter the remainder of her life, or encourage her to cheriſh hopes in her ſituation unjuſtifiable and futile. Pardon me, when I avow my terrors, and let my frankneſs plead in my excuſe. I cannot forbid you my houſe, for gratitude reſtrains me; I can only throw myſelf upon your generoſity, and entreat you to ſpare the feelings of an anxious, of a doating mother. Believe me, when I aſſure you, that I lament the neceſſity of rejecting your acquaintance; but there is no remedy, and Antonia's intereſt obliges me to beg you to forbear your viſits. By complying with my requeſt, you will increaſe the eſteem which I already feel for you, and of which every thing convinces me that you are truly deſerving."

"Your frankneſs charms me," replied Lorenzo: "You ſhall find, that in your favourable opinion of me you were not deceived; yet

yet I hope that the reaſons now in my power to allege, will perſuade you to withdraw a requeſt which I cannot obey without infinite reluctance. I love your daughter, love her moſt ſincerely; I wiſh for no greater happineſs than to inſpire her with the ſame ſentiments, and receive her hand at the altar as her huſband. 'Tis true I am not rich myſelf, my father's death has left me but little in my own poſſeſſion; but my expectations juſtify my pretending to the Condé de las Ciſternas' daughter."

He was proceeding, but Elvira interrupted him—

"Ah! Don Lorenzo, you forget in that pompous title the meanneſs of my origin. You forget that I have now paſſed fourteen years in Spain, diſavowed by my huſband's family, and exiſting upon a ſtipend barely ſufficient for the ſupport and education of my daughter. Nay, I have even been neglected by moſt of my own relations, who out of envy affect to doubt the reality of my marriage. My allowance being diſcontinued at my father-in-law's death, I was reduced to the very brink of want. In this ſituation I was found by my ſiſter, who, amongſt all her foibles, poſſeſſes a warm, generous and affectionate heart. She aided me with the little fortune which my father left her, perſuaded me to viſit Madrid, and has ſupported my child and myſelf ſince our quitting Murcia. Then, conſider not Antonia as deſcended from the Condé de las Ciſternas; conſider her as a poor and unprotected orphan, and the grand-child of the tradeſman Torribio Dalfa, as the needy penſi-

oner of that tradeſman's daughter. Reflect upon the difference between ſuch a ſituation and that of the nephew and heir of the potent duke of Medina. I believe your intentions to be honourable; but as there are no hopes that your uncle will approve of the union, I foreſee that the conſequence of your attachment muſt be fatal to my child's repoſe."

"Pardon me, Segnora; you are miſinformed if you ſuppoſe the duke of Medina to reſemble the generality of men. His ſentiments are liberal and diſintereſted; he loves me well, and I have no reaſon to dread his forbidding the marriage, when he perceives that my happineſs depends upon Antonia. But ſuppoſing him to refuſe his ſanction, what have I ſtill to fear? My parents are no more; my little fortune is in my own poſſeſſion; it will be ſufficient to ſupport Antonia, and I ſhall exchange for her hand Medina's dukedom without one ſigh of regret."

"You are young and eager; it is natural for you to entertain ſuch ideas. But experience has taught me to my coſt, that curſes accompany an unequal alliance. I married the Condé de las Ciſternas in oppoſition to the will of his relations; many an heart-pang has puniſhed me for the imprudent ſtep. Whereever we bent our courſe, a father's execration purſued Gonzalvo. Poverty overtook us, and no friend was near to relieve our wants. Still our mutual affection exiſted, but, alas! not without interruption. Accuſtomed to wealth and eaſe, ill could my huſband ſupport the tranſition to diſtreſs and indigence. He looked back with repining to the comforts which he once

once enjoyed. He regretted the ſituation which for my ſake he had quitted; and, in moments when deſpair poſſeſſed his mind, has reproached me with having made him the companion of want and wretchedneſs. He has called me his bane! the ſource of his ſorrows, the cauſe of his deſtruction! Ah! God! he little knew how much keener were my own heart's reproaches! He was ignorant that I ſuffered trebly, for myſelf, for my children, and for him! 'Tis true that his anger ſeldom laſted long: his ſincere affection for me ſoon revived in his heart, and then his repentance for the tears which he had made me ſhed, tortured me even more than his reproaches. He would throw himſelf on the ground, implore my forgiveneſs in the moſt frantic terms, and load himſelf with curſes for being the murderer of my repoſe. Taught by experience, that an union contracted againſt the inclinations of families on either ſide muſt be unfortunate, I will ſave my daughter from thoſe miſeries which I have ſuffered. Without your uncle's conſent, while I live, ſhe never ſhall be your's. Undoubtedly he will diſapprove of the union; his power is immenſe, and Antonia ſhall not be expoſed to his anger and perſecution."

"His perſecution? How eaſily may that be avoided! Let the worſt happen, it is but quitting Spain. My wealth may eaſily be realiſed. The Indian iſlands will offer us a ſecure retreat. I have an eſtate, though not of value, in Hiſpaniola: thither will we fly, and I ſhall conſider it to be my native country, if it gives me Antonia's undiſturbed poſſeſſion."

"Ah! youth, this is a fond, romantic viſion. Gonzalvo thought the ſame. He fancied that he could leave Spain without regret; but the moment of parting undeceived him. You know not yet what it is to quit your native land: to quit it, never to behold it more! You know not what it is to exchange the ſcenes where you have paſſed your infancy, for unknown realms and barbarous climates!—to be forgotten, utterly, eternally forgotten by the companions of your youth!—to ſee your deareſt friends, the fondeſt objects of your affection, periſhing with diſeaſes incidental to Indian atmoſpheres, and find yourſelf unable to procure for them neceſſary aſſiſtance! I have felt all this! My huſband and two ſweet babes found their graves in Cuba: nothing would have ſaved my young Antonia, but my ſudden return to Spain. Ah! Don Lorenzo, could you conceive what I ſuffered during my abſence! Could you know how ſincerely I regretted all that I left behind, and how dear to me was the very name of Spain! I envied the winds which blew towards it: and when the Spaniſh ſailor chaunted ſome well-known air as he paſſed along my window, tears filled my eyes while I thought upon my native land, Gonzalvo too——my huſband——"

Elvira pauſed. Her voice faltered, and ſhe concealed her face with her handkerchief. After a ſhort ſilence ſhe roſe from the ſopha, and proceeded——

"Excuſe my quitting you for a few moments: the remembrance of what I have ſuffered has much agitated me, and I need to be alone. Till I return peruſe theſe lines. After

ter my huſband's death, I found them among his papers. Had I known ſooner that he entertained ſuch ſentiments, grief would have killed me. He wrote theſe verſes on his voyage to Cuba, when his mind was clouded by ſorrow, and he forgot that he had a wife and children. What we are loſing ever ſeems to us the moſt precious. Gonzalvo was quitting Spain for ever, and therefore was Spain dearer to his eyes than all elſe which the world contained. Read them, Don Lorenzo, they will give you ſome idea of the feelings of a baniſhed man."

Elvira put a paper into Lorenzo's hand, and retired from the chamber. The youth examined the contents, and found them to be as follows:

THE EXILE.

FAREWELL, oh native Spain! farewell for ever!
Theſe baniſh'd eyes ſhall view thy coaſts no more:
A mournful preſage tells my heart, that never
Gonzalvo's ſteps again ſhall preſs thy ſhore.

Huſhed are the winds; while ſoft the veſſel ſailing
With gentle motion plows the unruffled main,
I feel my boſom's boaſted courage failing,
And curſe the waves which bear me far from Spain.

I ſee it yet! Beneath yon blue clear heaven
Still do the ſpires, ſo well-beloved, appear.
From yonder craggy point the gale of even
Still wafts my native accents to mine ear.

Propped on ſome moſs-crowned rock, and gaily ſinging,
There in the ſun his nets the fiſher dries;
Oft have I heard the plaintive ballad, bringing
Scenes of paſt joys before my ſorrowing eyes.

Ah!

Ah! happy ſwain! he waits the accuſtomed hour,
When twilight-gloom obſcures the cloſing ſky;
Then gladly ſeeks his loved paternal bower,
And ſhares the feaſt his native fields ſupply.

Friendſhip and Love, his cottage gueſts, receive him
With honeſt welcome and with ſmile ſincere:
No threatening woes of preſent joys bereave him;
No ſigh his boſom owns, his cheek no tear.

Ah! happy ſwain! ſuch bliſs to me denying,
Fortune thy lot with envy bids me view;
Me, who, from home and Spain an exile flying,
Bid all I value, all I love, adieu.

No more mine ear ſhall liſt the well-known ditty
Sung by ſome mountain-girl, who tends her goats,
Some village ſwain imploring amorous pity,
Or ſhepherd chanting wild his ruſtic notes.

No more my arms a parent's fond embraces,
No more my heart domeſtic calm muſt know;
Far from theſe joys, with ſighs which memory traces,
To ſultry ſkies and diſtant climes I go.

Where Indian ſuns engender new diſeaſes,
Where ſnakes and tigers breed, I bend my way
To brave the feveriſh thirſt no art appeaſes,
The yellow plague, and madding blaze of day.

But not to feel ſlow pangs conſume my liver,
To die by piece-meal in the bloom of age,
My boiling blood drunk by inſatiate fever,
And brain delirious with the day-ſtar's rage,

Can make me know ſuch grief, as thus to ſever,
With many a bitter ſigh, dear land! from thee;
To feel this heart muſt dote on thee for ever,
And feel that all thy joys are torn from me!

Ah me! how oft will fancy's ſpells, in ſlumber,
Recall my native country to my mind!
How oft regret will bid me ſadly number
Each loſt delight, and dear friend left behind!

Wild Murcia's vales and loved romantic bowers,
The river on whoſe banks a child I played,
My caſtle's antient halls, its frowning towers,
Each much-regretted wood, and well-known glade.

Dreams

Dreams of the land where all my wiſhes centre,
Thy ſcenes, which I am doomed no more to know,
Full oft ſhall memory trace, my ſoul's tormentor,
And turn each pleaſure paſt to preſent woe.

But, lo! the ſun beneath the waves retires;
Night ſpeeds apace her empire to reſtore;
Clouds from my ſight obſcure the village ſpires,
Now ſeen but faintly, and now ſeen no more.

Oh! breathe not, winds! Still be the water's motion!
Sleep, ſleep, my bark, in ſilence on the main!
So, when to-morrow's light ſhall guild the ocean,
Once more mine eyes ſhall ſee the coaſt of Spain.

Vain is the wiſh! My laſt petition ſcorning,
Freſh blows the gale, and high the billows ſwell:
Far ſhall we be before the break of morning:
Oh! then for ever, native Spain, farewell!

Lorenzo had ſcarcely time to read theſe lines, when Elvira returned to him: the giving a free courſe to her tears had relieved her, and her ſpirits had regained their uſual compoſure.

"I have nothing more to ſay, my lord," ſaid ſhe; "you have heard my apprehenſions, and my reaſons for begging you not to repeat your viſits. I have thrown myſelf in full confidence upon your honour. I am certain that you will not prove my opinion of you to have been too favourable."

"But one queſtion more, Segnora, and I leave you. Should the duke of Medina approve my love, would my addreſſes be unacceptable to yourſelf and the fair Antonia?"

"I will be open with you, Don Lorenzo: there being little probability of ſuch an union taking place, I fear that it is deſired but too ardently by my daughter. You have made an impreſſion

impreſſion upon her young heart which gives me the moſt ſerious alarm: to prevent that impreſſion from growing ſtronger, I am obliged to decline your acquaintance. For me, you may be ſure that I ſhould rejoice at eſtabliſhing my child ſo advantageouſly. Conſcious that my conſtitution, impaired by grief and illneſs, forbids me to expect a long continuance in this world, I tremble at the thought of leaving her under the protection of a perfect ſtranger. The marquis de las Ciſternas is totally unknown to me. He will marry: his lady may look upon Antonia with an eye of diſpleaſure, and deprive her of her only friend. Should the duke, your uncle, give his conſent, you need not doubt obtaining mine and my daughter's; but, without his, hope not for ours. At all events, whatever ſteps you may take, whatever may be the duke's deciſion, till you know it, let me beg your forbearing to ſtrengthen, by your preſence, Antonia's prepoſſeſſion. If the ſanction of your relations authoriſes your addreſſing her as your wife, my doors fly open to you. If that ſanction is refuſed, be ſatisfied to poſſeſs my eſteem and gratitude, but remember that we muſt meet no more."

Lorenzo promiſed reluctantly to conform to this decree: but he added, that he hoped ſoon to obtain that conſent, which would give him a claim to the renewal of their acquaintance. He then explained to her why the marquis had not called in perſon: and made no ſcruple of confiding to her his ſiſter's hiſtory. He concluded by ſaying, "that he hoped to ſet Agnes at liberty the next day; and that, as ſoon as Don Raymond's

mond's fears were quieted upon this ſubject, he would loſe no time in aſſuring Donna Elvira of his friendſhip and protection."

The lady ſhook her head.

"I tremble for your ſiſter," ſaid ſhe; "I have heard many traits of the domina of St. Clare's character from a friend who was educated in the ſame convent with her: ſhe reported her to be haughty, inflexible, ſuperſtitious and revengeful. I have ſince heard, that ſhe is infatuated with the idea of rendering her convent the moſt regular in Madrid, and never forgave thoſe whoſe imprudence threw upon it the ſlighteſt ſtain. Though naturally violent and ſevere when her intereſts require it, ſhe well knows how to aſſume an appearance of benignity. She leaves no means untried to perſuade young women of rank to become members of her community: ſhe is implacable when once incenſed, and has too much intrepidity to ſhrink at taking the moſt rigorous meaſures for puniſhing the offender. Doubtleſs, ſhe will conſider your ſiſter's quitting the convent as a diſgrace thrown upon it: ſhe will uſe every artifice to avoid obeying the mandate of his holineſs; —I ſhudder to think that Donna Agnes is in the hands of this dangerous woman."

Lorenzo now roſe to take leave. Elvira gave him her hand at parting, which he kiſſed reſpectfully; and, telling her that he ſoon hoped for the permiſſion to ſalute that of Antonia, he returned to his hotel. The lady was perfectly ſatisfied with the converſation which had paſſed between them: ſhe looked forward with ſatisfaction to the proſpect of his becoming her ſon-

in-

in-law; but prudence bade her conceal from her daughter's knowledge the flattering hopes which herſelf now ventured to entertain.

Scarcely was it day, and already Lorenzo was at the convent of St. Clare, furniſhed with the neceſſary mandate. The nuns were at matins. He waited impatiently for the concluſion of the ſervice; and at length the prioreſs appeared at the parlour-grate. Agnes was demanded. The old lady replied with a melancholy air, that the dear child's ſituation grew hourly more dangerous: that the phyſicians deſpaired of her life; but that they had declared the only chance for her recovery to conſiſt in keeping her quiet, and not to permit thoſe to approach her whoſe preſence was likely to agitate her. Not a word of all this was believed by Lorenzo, any more than he credited the expreſſions of grief and affection for Agnes with which this account was interlarded. To end the buſineſs, he put the pope's bull into the hands of the domina, and inſiſted that, ill or in health, his niece ſhould be delivered to him without delay.

The prioreſs received the paper with an air of humility; but no ſooner had her eye glanced over the contents, than her reſentment baffled all the efforts of hypocriſy. A deep crimſon ſpread itſelf over her face, and ſhe darted upon Lorenzo looks of rage and menace.

"This order is poſitive," ſaid ſhe, in a voice of anger, which ſhe in vain ſtrove to diſguiſe: "willingly would I obey it, but, unfortunately, it is out of my power."

Lorenzo interrupted her by an exclamation of ſurpriſe.

"I re-

"I repeat it, Segnor, to obey this order is totally out of my power. From tenderneſs to a brother's feelings, I would have communicated the ſad event to you by degrees, and have prepared you to hear it with fortitude. My meaſures are broken through: this order commands me to deliver up to you the ſiſter Agnes without delay; I am, therefore, obliged to inform you without circumlocution, that on Friday laſt ſhe expired."

Lorenzo ſtarted back with horror, and turned pale. A moment's recollection convinced him that this aſſertion muſt be falſe, and it reſtored him to himſelf.

"You deceive me!" ſaid he, paſſionately: "but five minutes paſt you aſſured me that, though ill, ſhe was ſtill alive. Produce her this inſtant! See her I muſt and will; and every attempt to keep her from me will be unavailing."

"You forget yourſelf, Segnor: you owe reſpect to my age as well as my profeſſion. Your ſiſter is no more. If I at firſt concealed her death, it was from dreading leſt an event ſo unexpected ſhould produce on you too violent an effect. In truth, I am but ill repaid for my attention. And what intereſt, I pray you, ſhould I have in detaining her? To know her wiſh of quitting our ſociety is a ſufficient reaſon for me to wiſh her abſence, and think her a diſgrace to the ſiſterhood of St. Clare: but ſhe has forfeited my affection in a manner yet more culpable. Her crimes were great; and when you know the cauſe of her death, you will doubtleſs rejoice, Don Lorenzo, that ſuch a wretch is no longer in exiſtence. She was taken ill

ill on Thurſday laſt on returning from confeſſion in the Capuchin chapel: her malady ſeemed attended with ſtrange circumſtances; but ſhe perſiſted in concealing its cauſe. Thanks to the Virgin, we were too ignorant to ſuſpect it! Judge then what muſt have been our conſternation, our horror, when ſhe was delivered the next day of a ſtill-born child, whom ſhe immediately followed to the grave. How, Segnor? Is it poſſible that your countenance expreſſes no ſurpriſe, no indignation? Is it poſſible that your ſiſter's infamy was known to you, and that ſtill ſhe poſſeſſed your affection? In that caſe, you have no need of my compaſſion. I can ſay nothing more, except repeat my inability of obeying the orders of his holineſs. Agnes is no more; and, to convince you that what I ſay is true, I ſwear by our bleſſed Saviour, that three days have paſſed ſince ſhe was buried."

Here ſhe kiſſed a ſmall crucifix which hung at her girdle: ſhe then roſe from her chair, and quitted the parlour. As ſhe withdrew ſhe caſt upon Lorenzo a ſcornful ſmile.

"Farewell, Segnor," ſaid ſhe; "I know no remedy for this accident. I fear that even a ſecond bull from the pope will not procure your ſiſter's reſurrection."

Lorenzo alſo retired, penetrated with affliction: but Don Raymond's, at the news of this event, amounted to madneſs: he would not be convinced that Agnes was really dead; and continued to inſiſt that the walls of St. Clare ſtill confined her. No arguments could make him abandon his hopes of regaining her. Every day ſome freſh ſcheme was invented for procuring intelligence of her, and all of them were attended with the ſame ſucceſs.

On

On his part, Medina gave up the idea of ever ſeeing his ſiſter more; yet he believed that ſhe had been taken off by unfair means. Under this perſuaſion, he encouraged Don Raymond's reſearches, determined, ſhould he diſcover the leaſt warrant for his ſuſpicions, to take a ſevere vengeance upon the unfeeling prioreſs. The loſs of his ſiſter affected him ſincerely: nor was it the leaſt cauſe of his diſtreſs, that propriety obliged him for ſome time to defer mentioning Antonia to the duke. In the mean while, his emiſſaries conſtantly ſurrounded Elvira's door. He had intelligence of all the movements of his miſtreſs. As ſhe never failed every Thurſday to attend the ſermon in the Capuchin cathedral, he was ſecure of ſeeing her once a week; though, in compliance with his promiſe, he carefully ſhunned her obſervation. Thus two long months paſſed away. Still no information was procured of Agnes. All but the marquis credited her death: and now Lorenzo determined to diſcloſe his ſentiments to his uncle: he had already dropped ſome hints of his intention to marry: they had been as favourably received as he could expect, and he harboured no doubt of the ſucceſs of his application.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.